REFLECTIONS

ON

Men's Prejudices

AGAINST /Men (de)

RELIGION

AND THEIR

MISTAKES

In the Practice of it.

Translated from the French.

In Two PARTS.

LONDON:

Printed for H. CLEMENTS, at the Half-Moon in St. Paul's Church-Tard; and W. BRAY, at the Bell and Dragon, between Charing-Crofs and White-Hall, 1709.

REFLORGIONS Moft Reve Failer in GOD, Fielndies RGATAGA FORCE ALCOMON. ANB THEIR MISTAKES stice of it. क्षिणावयी वर्षा May In Two out I WE VENT N perping th Iran hillor Chillies Mex Elect The offer Hills of the Charles Cross of World Pund has word

tions of the HTTOT

Most Reve Father in GOD,

JOHN Lord Archbishop

make the Boo Avon to

Your Orange nador woods

AND

Primate of England.

May it please Your Grace,

IN perusing the Original of this Translation (which now Humbly offers it self to Your Grace)

I found such lively and just Descriptions

tions of the Corruption of Christians, the false Reasonings of Atheists and Libertines so convincingly refuted, and all the various Forms of falle Zeal, falle Devotion, and false Virtue, so clearly discover'd; that I could not but be destrous to make the Book known to a Nation where open Prophaneness so much abounds, and where Religion is too frequently Mistaken by those who pretend to have any; and I am persmaded it will not be unacceptable to such as desire to lead a true Christian Life; to whom it may be greatly useful, not only by tracing out Selfe Love wand Pride in all their Dispulses, but by affording insert fuch lively and just Deferie-

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them many excellent Advices and Cautions in their way to Salvation; helping them to see the Deceitfulness of their own Hearts, and shewing them wherein true Religion confifts. Here that vicious Modesty which too many are infected with, of being asham'd to own a Sense of Religion, may find a Cure by Arguments that convince it both of Impiety and Great Folly: In a word, My Lord, I believe not only Beginners in the Practice of Religion, but even those who have made a good Progress in the Spiritual Life, may find many useful Reflections suited to their several States, especially in the Chapters of Fer-

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Fervour, of Devotion, and of Exactness in little Things; and by the three last Chapters of Purity, Humility and Forgiving Injuries, it will appear how very contrary to true Religion, the Lives of the greatest part of the World are, who pretend to be and think themselves Christians.

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Your Grace will likewise find many particular Abuses and Superstitions of the Romanists condemned by this Author, taxing them with placing Religion in things which are rather contrary to it; of which he gives several Instances in those very Practices that are most Encou-

Encourag'd and Taught by their Leaders; which is the more to be admir'd in him, who was himself a Priest of the Romish Church, as appears in his Dedication to the Archbishop of Paris.

Your Grace, I hope, will pardon my presuming to give you this short draught to engage Your Approbation of a Treatise, the Design of which is the same with all Your Grace's long unwearied Endeavours of directing Men to True and Solid Piety, both by the excellent Example of your Life, and your most Pathetick Discourses. 'Twas this, My Lord, made me ambitious of presixing Your Venerable Name to A 4.

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this Translation, that it might be recommended to the Reader by the Patronage of a Person, whose Virtues are so well known; particularly that Sweetness and Humility that makes Piety so lovely, and which indeed is so Essential to it. This admirable Virtue, join'd with that engaging Affability, which so well fuits Your facred Character, is my Encouragement thus to approach Your Grace, and as it gains you the Affection and Reverence of all good Men, so does your whole Conduct make it the Duty of all to wish, that you may continue long in the great Employment you are in, Name to

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in, for the Glory of God, and the Good of his Church; which is the Hearty Prayer of

Your Grace's

most Humble,

most Dutiful,

AND

most Respectful Servant

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TRANSLATOR

TO THE

READER.

HISBook was Publish'd in French, under the Title of Thoughts and Reflections on the Wanderings or Strayings of Men in the way of Salvation, which is indeed the Subject of the Book; but I was induced to change the Title in Compliance with the Opinion of some Friends, who did not approve of it in our Language. The Author's Name, De Villiers, is not much known among us, but the several Editions which his Book has born at Paris, Lyons, Bruffels, and the Hague, shews that it has been very well receiv'd and esteem'd Abroad; tho'

The Translator to the Reader.

tho' being Publish'd in a time of War, may have made it the less known in England. There will several things be found in it, that relate only to Customs in the Romish Church, which I was advis'd by some to leave out, and to accommodate the Book wholly to our own. But besides that I thought this would have been a great Injustice to the Author, by depriving him of his due Praise, for Discerning and freely Reproving the Abuses of his own Party; I hop'd those Passages might be of Use to some of that Communion in our Nation, by giving them a Light that might help to undeceive them. And therefore, excepting a few Instances that would have been of no Use, and some of them not understood by those who have never been out of England, I have left them all entire. must desire the Reader to look for nothing here but folid Truth, without the Orna_e

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The Translator to the Reader.

Ornaments of Language, which the Nature of these Reflections would not well admit of; The Author's Stile is Close and Concise, with a peculiar Turn, and sometimes a little Obscurity, that render'd the Translation very difficult: If any thing remains in it not perfectly clear, 'tis that I chose rather to leave the Sense Uncertain than to alter it, but I believe there will be very little found of that kind. I have nothing more to Advertise the Reader of, but to desire he will excuse what Faults may have elcaped the Press, and that he will give himself the trouble to correct the Errata with his Pen; and if he reads these Reflections with a real Defire to Improve by them, I doubt not, that whatever his State or Temper is, he will find something particularly adapted to it, and that may be useful to him.

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F the General Defection of Christians from the Obligations of Religion. Of the Difficulties which deter Christians from the Practice of their Religion. Of some groundless Prejudices against Reliof the little Faith among Christians. p. 29 Of the false Ideas Christians have of the Duty of their Religion. Of the little care Christians take to study their Religion. Of the Danger to which Christians expose themselves by being Ignorant of, and not practifing their Religion. p. 82 Of

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Reflecti-

Reflections on the Prejudices of Men against Religion, &c.

VOL. I.

Of the General Defection of Christians from the Obligations of their Religion.

F a Man of good Sense, who had never heard any thing of Christianity, on his Arrival at Paris from the furthermost parts of the new World, should ask what kind of Religion the Christian was; and some one, imposing on his Ignorance, should tell him, it was a Religion that allow'd of all kind of Vice; but another, on the contrary, willing to inform him fincerely, should tell him it was was a Religion that condemn'd the very leaft Vice; which of these two could he believe? He would certainly believe the first, if he form'd his Judgment by the Manners of Christians; and he would be a long time at Paris, or any other Town of Europe, before the Conduct of thofe

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those Christians he convers'd with, could con-

vince him of his being mistaken.

One cannot give a juster Idea of the Defection of Christians, than by saying, That there would be nothing almost to be chang'd in their Manners, if the Christian Religion taught the very contrary to what it teaches. In effect, what should Christians need to lay aside? What should they need to change in their Practice, if the Truths of Religion were look'd upon as Lies and Imposters? Some External Ceremonies might be laid aside; the rest would go on at the old Rate. The Gentry would live as they do; the Ladies would not be more given to the Vanities of the World, than they are; The Merchant, the Magistrate, the Soldier, and perhaps the Divine too, would act in their several Professions, just as they do.

If this American I mention'd, should at last come to a more just and true Notion of the Christian Religion, if he believ'd it to be what it really is; he would conclude, that the greatest part of those he saw at Paris, or elsewhere,

were not Christians.

He would be rold, that the Christian Religion, is a Religion which teaches Men to practice all manner of Virtues, and to discharge the Duties it requires, with so great an Exactness, that the Failing in one of them, is to fail in all. That 'tisa Religion which condemns all manner of Vice with such Strictness, as to turn even the very Cautions necessary to secure Men from Vice, into so many Precepts; and to look upon those

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those as Guilty, who expose themselves to the least Occasion of committing it.

What could this Man, who had receiv'd fuch an Idea of our Religion think, if he went, for Instance, one Night to the Tuilleries; if he was carried sometimes to Plays, and Opera's; if he was Witness to the Diversions of a Carnival; if he law People who had no other Business, but to run from House to House to get drunk with their Friends, or to employ all their Wit and Care about contriving and helping on an Intrigue. He wou'd fay certainly none of those People were Christians. But, if from a View of this open and bare fac'd Corruption, he should look into the infide of Houses, and consider what passes in Families, if he faw Friends and Relations at Variance, if he came to know how Justice was administred, and Trade manag'd; how every one, wholly taken up with the Care of enriching or raising himself, grieves, cheats, suborns and ruins his Neighbour; he would cry out once more, Certainly there is no Christianity here.

But some would tell him, that there are Pertons who make it their particular Profession to observe their Religion, viz. the Clergy and the Devotes. I question, whether in examining the Conduct of the greatest part of those whom the World call Devotes, he would judge otherwife of them, than he did of those he had feen

at the Tuilleries, or at Balls.

If he faw by what Principle and Motive Men enter'd into Holy Orders; what Traffick was made of Benefices, and to what Uses they employ'd their Revenues; if he found an Abbot ule-

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useless to the Commonwealth, and a Scandal to Religion, in the most profane Company, and most dangerous Conversations; if he saw him wholly given up to the World, and to Sin, unger an Habit that confecrates him to God; if he beheld the Manners of those who are dedicated to God under a Habit still more holy, and faw Persons who are bound to sing the Praises of God five or fix times a Day, at other times employing their Tongues only to tear in pieces one anothers Reputation, and bringing into their Retirement, all the Vices, all the Corruptions, and all the Scandals of the World, which they profess to have renounced; If he confider'd those whom the World call Devotes, and found no other Character of their Devotion, than a foft lazy Life, or a proud Contempt of all who dare not pretend to be Devotes. No, no, he'd cry again, None of those Persons are Chri-

If some one finding him conclude, that none of those he had examin'd were Christians, should pretend to explain to him, that how much soever they were corrupted, they were notwithstanding Christians, because they had received the Grace of Faith at Baptism, and trom time to time performed some Act of their Religion; I know not, if this Man could believe that this was sufficient to make Men Christians: and if they should persuade him of it, he would at least have very good Reason to reply, That it was in vain to tell him, that the Christian Religion taught Virtue, and condemn'd Vice, since a Man might be a Christian Religion taught Virtue, and condemn'd Vice, since a Man might be a Christian

stian without shunning the one, and without practifing the other.

But, if a more perfect Knowledge of the Truths of our Faith was given him, it he should

be told for Example,

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'That Christians are Men whom God has chose to make eternally happy, this being the End to which they are destin'd; that all they find, all they look upon, all they are busied about, while they are in this World, are only transitory Amusements; That how much soever they may set their Hearts on these Things, all will be taken from them when they least think on it; and none can escape Death, which puts an End to all the Cares and Occupations this World gives them.

'That this Eternal Felicity God has appointed to them, must be obtain'd by good Works. 'And the Time in which they ought to labour to acquire it, is the Time given them in this 'World, longer to some, shorter to others; 'no body knowing how great his Portion of it

may be.

'Happiness, during this uncertain Time, is so great, that when it shall be run out, it will be too late to think of it. That they must then lose it for ever, and by the Loss of it sall into Miseries which will never end, and where without Intermission or Hope, they will be tormented with all the Pains that Men can suffer.

Such a rough Draught and light Sketch shew'd to this Man, of the Character and Obligations

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of Christians, would make him cry out more than ever he had done, That all whom he had examin'd, were nothing less than Christians; and if it should be affirm'd, that still they were Christians, because they had Faith. Ah, he would fay, if they are Christians, such Chri-

stians are Fools and Senseless.

But, if he should be told further, 'That they " who lead fuch vicious Lives, die as they live; that 'tis what God himself has threatned them with, and that every Word almost of the Books which contain his Will, include fuch 'Threatnings; that he has plainly declar'd that 'he will be ferv'd, that he is jealous of the Services he requires; that they who have receiv'd 'the Knowledge of his Law and keep it not, ' shall be more severely punish'd, than those to whom it is not reveal'd; And, that in the Books which have been writ by his Order, and dictated by his Spirit, he has taken care there should be collected, a thousand Examples of dread ul Punishments of his Vengeance, both in this and the other World.

This Man wou'd no longer fay the Christians were foolish and fenfeless, he'd say they were mad and frantick; and I question whether he cou'd ever persuade himself, that Men of Reason were capable of coming to such a

pitch of Extravagance and Madness.

How (wou'd he fay) are those whom I fee fo corrupted, fo transported with Pleasure, who are so lewd, covetous and revengeful, who never do any Good, and are continually doing Evil; are these Persons who hope for an Eterhe had istians; y were Ah, he

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Christiay they on wheat Men such a

n I fee re, who sho nedoing n Eternal nal Happiness, and are threatned with an Eternal Punishment! But sure then, says he, their Religion has not been well explain'd to them, most certainly they have never been told what you tell me.

They have been plainly told (he would be answer'd) that it is God who spake to them, and who became Man, that he might make his Instructions more sensible to them. he was not content only to tell them that they must obtain Eternal Glory by Good Works, ' but wou'd also set them an Example of it; and 'though that Glory was his own, he wou'd both suffer and be put to Death, to teach them it was not to be given for nothing. That after he had appeared among them, and given them his Precepts from his own Mouth, he took Care to have them written by those who heard them, not by one Man alone, but by many. That Christians have these Books in their Hands, and read them daily; neither is that care only entrusted to themselves, but there are a Set of Men, whose Profession it is to explain these Writings to them. 'run to hear them, and are sometimes so much affected with what they hear, as to resolve on changing their Manner of Life, but their Refolutions are of short Continuance. 'oblige them the more to the Observance of these Precepts, they are exhorted to put them. felves frequently in the State they would defire to be in, when God shall require an Account of their Life, and for that end, to quit 'their Debaucheries, and the Occasions of 'rm,

and to betake themselves to a Life of Piety and good Works. That many of 'em follow this Advice; and half of those you see so debauch'd, have a thousand times acknowledg'd their Sins, and ask'd Pardon of God for them; Nay, that some of them have even been at the point of Death, and had a near Profpect of that Eternal Punishment they had inevitably fallen into, if God had not allow'd them longer Life.

How! (wou'd he interrupt them) These Christians whom I see so corrupted, are they so well taught, have they fo many Motives to forfake their Sins, fo many Helps towards it! How! are they, or have they been fensible of that dreadful Danger to which they expose themselves, and yet are not reform'd by it!

This Man being unable to conceive fo great a Folly, could not forbear asking a thousand times, Do you tell me true? Is this possible!---And at last being fully convinc'd of it, I believe he could hardly be perswaded that these Men were Rational Creatures. Come, come, he'd fay, let us return to the new World, whole Savage Inhabitants are not fo senseless, are not so unthinking a Race as the Christians of Europe.

'Tis thus a Heathen of good Sense would read fon on our Religion, when once the Principles of it had been explain'd to him. And what should hinder us from Reasoning as he would do? If we, who have receiv'd the Knowledge of Religion from our Childhood, which he had only a flight View of, do reason after another manner, we must conclude that either we have

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not fo much good Sense as he has, or that there must be fomething else which hinders us from

reasoning as truly and justly.

This Heathen, whom I have suppos'd to be a Man of Senfe, would eafily judge of the Corruption of Christians, because he has just learnt what Christianity is; the Idea which has been given him of it, is yet fresh in his Mind, and there's nothing to hinder him from judging according to that Idea. But if he was to flay fome time among Christians, that Idea would wear off by degrees, and by frequenting them he would infensibly imitate their Customs and Manners, and so become less capable of judging of their Irregularities than he was at first : His Interest and his Complacence, or the Hurry of a Life he must pass with them, in Business or in Pleasures, would deprive him of that Calmness and Serenity with which he reason'd and judg'd of Religion when he was first instructed in it. This is the Case of Christians, who because they have always been accounted, and confrantly call themselves Christians, forget what they really are, and can never be capable of feeing their Corruption, but by refuming that Idea which was given them of their Religion, when they first began to learn it.

Every Christian then ought to do, with respect to himself, as this Heathen would do injudging of Christians in general, he ought to judge of himself by the Rules of good Sense, applied to the Truths of the Religion he has been instru-

cted in.

Then

Then every one, confidering how little his Life is suitable to his Faith, could not forbear crying out, That he was a Fool and a Madman.

The greatest part of Men are only blinded in this Matter as to themselves: There is scarce one vicious Christian that could forbear calling another whom he faw as vicious as himfelf, a Fool and a Madman, if he judg'd cooly of him. One who plunges himself daily into all manner of Vice, can yet fee clear enough the Faults of those who do the fame ; do not Rogues daily call one another Rogues?

Perhaps the only Reason why Men live with fo much Tranquillity in their Vices, is because they never consider themselves with the same Coolness with which they judge of others.

A Christian, who would calmly consider himself, and reflect upon all those Truths of Religion he has been taught, would not only be able to judge of those Irregularities I have obferv'd, by the fole Light of Reason and good Sense, but might even certainly determine what

is Virtue, and what is not.

The Christian Religion owns and admits of no Virtues, but those which are animated by the Spirit of Charity, that is, which are done with a regard to God, are measur'd by his Will, and the Order which he himself has prescrib'd. It fets no value on the outward Action, when it does not proceed from that Spirit; and as the greatest Action is of no worth without this Spirit, so there is none so small which does not become of an infinite value with it.

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A Christian with this Principle alone would conclude, that all Actions done on any worldly Consideration, for Interest, by Custom, or on Politick Ends, are not Christian Virtues; and as upon a View of the Corruption of Christians, he had concluded they were not Christians, he'd perhaps do the same upon a Knowledge of their Virtues: At least if to be able to judge of 'em, he would ask those whom he saw practise these Virtues, Is it with a respect to God you do these things? He would find few that could

answer Yes, if they spoke sincerely.

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It would be likewise easie for him to apply this Principle to all those great and glorious Actions he should see among Christians. If a Father or Mother of a Family should abandon the Care of their House and Children to employ themselves in Works of Mercy abroad; it would be very natural for him to ask if those Persons were in the Order in which God had placed them? If it should be answered No; but that on the contrary God had given them their House and Family, in which to exercise the Works of Mercy they bestow abroad, he would conclude they were bad Christians. If he should fee others changing their State and Condition. revolving in their Minds great Designs of Retirement or Zeal, and remembring that there are no good Works in the Christian Religion, but such as are regulated by the Will of God; he should ask them, Has God commanded you the Defigns you are revolving upon? And they should anfwer, that they had not confulted him about them; he would conclude that these People, notwithstanding their Retirement, and all their

Zeal, were not Christians.

Thus measuring all the Virtues in practice a. mong Christians, by that clear and evident Principle of their Religion, and judging them by the Light of good Sense, he would find no great Difficulty to diffinguish what was truly a Virtue, from what was only the Appearance or the Shadow of it: And when an Action tended not immediately to God, nor was ordained by his Will, he would fay, Have a care that this is not a Superstition, a human Invention, an Esfect of your own Caprice, or of your Self-love. And how many Practices are propos'd to Christians, as esfential Duties of their Religion, which when measur'd by that Principle, will appear to be either Abuses, or at best, Works which have no Worth, and are of no Value, but as they have a Tendency to those true and real Virtues to which they may dispose us.

In a word, as to the Duties which concern our Neighbour, one need only explain to this Christian, the Principles of the Christian Religion concerning them, to enable him to resolve a Thousand Cases of Conscience, and to see the Obligation of Restitution, and re-

conciling of Differences.

The Christian Religion commands us to love our Neighbour as our self; and that we may direct this Love by a sure Rule, it forbids us absolutely the doing to others what we would not they should do unto us.

There would be no need of more to make this Christian say, that the greatest part of Law Suits

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Suits were unjust, that Revenge was forbidden, that all studied Delays in the Payment of Debts were so many Thefts; that Slanderers, Deceivers, and Envious Persons were no true Christians; and that if the whole Art of Courtiers lies in supplanting and overturning their Neighbours, to raise themselves upon their Ruins, there is no Christianity at Court. By the same Principle he would condemn the Artificers and Merchants, who make a Trade of cheating; the Judges, and all inferior Officers who are concern'd in Tryals and Law Suits, when both the one and the other do either neglect the Affairs entrusted to them, or perplex and confound 'em to make their Advantage of them, or judge them only according to the Will of those who have flatter'd or brib'd them. It would be easie enough to determine that all fuch People were no Christians, fince they all do to others what in Reason they would not have others do to them.

Of the Difficulties which deter Christians from the Practice of their Religion.

IT is certain there is no Article of the Chriftian Religion, which is not a Motive to a Christian to lead a holy Life, or to condemn him of Extravagance or Folly when he does not.

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A Man who is folely indebted to God for his Being, his Faculties, and all that he possesses in this World, has an indispensable Obligation of being faithful to him; and it will be hard to say why we cannot without Indignation behold the Ingratitude of a Subject, who should rebel against his Prince, to whom he owes his whole Fortune, and not have the same Indignation for a Man who rebels against God, to whom he owes his All.

A Man who employs his Fortune, his Wit, and his Talents, to dishonour and offend God, is like a rebellious Subject, who should employ the Riches and Authority he had received from his Prince to raise Forces against him.

When a Subject revolts against his Prince, he hopes to make himself independent. He finds, or imagines he shall find, some means to uphold him in his Rebellion. But that is what he that rebels against God can never hope for. He depends so much upon him, that he cannot make one Step without his Assistance, and in the very time he offends him the most, he cannot be ignorant that it is in God's Power to consound and destroy him.

Tis the last degree of Folly for a Man unarm'd to insult one that has a Sword in his Hand, and we may conclude he seeks his own Destruction, and has no value for his Life, who would provoke an Enemy that needs but to stretch forth his Arm to cut him off. Such is the Folly of a Sinner that leads a criminal and vicious

Life.

To

To lead a holy Life, is as much a Maxim of Wisdom and Prudence to a Christian, as it is a Maxim in the World to keep fair with, or ap-

peafe a powerful Enemy.

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There are some Men naturally so proud or indifferent, as not to value the Favours of the Court, nor make the least Step towards the obtaining them; and perhaps there is a greater Number of Christians so insensible, as not to be concern'd for the obtaining an eternal Reward, not to be mov'd with the Happiness of another Life.

When a Man neglects the Court, and seeks no Preserment there, he has some other Establishment in his view; and how moderate soever his Fortune be, he resolves to be contented with it, because he hopes not to be miserable in it; but a Christian, who neglects an eternal Reward, cannot have that Hope. There is no Medium; if he is not sav'd, he must be damn'd.

To be indifferent to an eternal Reward, one fhould be so too with regard to an eternal Punishment. He who reckons the Happiness of Heaven nothing, ought also to reckon the Pains

of Hell nothing.

A Man, who without making his Court, or rendring any Service to the State, should say he hop'd for a Pension or Employment, because the King was rich and liberal, would be yet less a Fool than the Christian, who leading a vicious Life, should say he hop'd for Salvation, because God was merciful.

If

If it be objected that the Mercy of God far exceeds the Bounty of a Prince; I answer, that there is no Prince, who hath so often and so expressly declar'd, that he will bestow no Favours on those who neglect them, as God has declar'd, that he will have no Mercy on those that despise it.

God is infinitely good, faithful in his Promifes, preventing, relieving and rewarding those who serve him. One would not therefore think that Men who are us'd to serve hard, covetous, false and ungrateful Masters, should be so averse

to ferve fo good a Mafter.

The Services be requires are hard and painful (may some say) but it is not hard to obtain that which will render them easie, I mean Grace, which we need only ask to obtain. No Officer, how poor soever, would say that it was difficult for him to raise Men, or get ready his Equipage, when he need only go to the Royal Treasury, to demand the Payment of an Order assign'd him for defraying of his Expences; yet no Prince's Order is so saithfully paid, as God gives his Grace to those who ask it.

Action, because it appears difficult, is to sorget that it is a Christian Action. No Action is a Christian Action. No Action is a Christian Action without Grace, no Action is

difficult with Grace.

But a Christian's Life, is a Life of Constraint and Self-denyal, it appears a Melaneholy Profession, and a renouncing of Ease. Would not one whink that such as give this Character of a Christian Life, were Persons swimming in Pleasure and Joy, who who tion who ever Sorre was a from great

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who had not one Moment of Trouble or Vexation in their Life; yet there is not one of them, who either is, or thinks himself Happy: Whatever kind of Life they follow, they find it full of Sorrow and Pain; and the Christian Life was a Life of Constraint, would it differ in this from a Worldly Life, is there any Life requires greater Constraint than a Worldly Life?

Men think they ought to constrain themselves for the World, and yet are afraid to do it for God. What Repose can the World give us Hopes of, that is equal to the Peace of a good

Conscience?

But we must bear our Cross, and that gives the Mind an Idea full of Grief and Affliction. If this Idea discourages you, 'tis because you don't understand your Religion. For a Christian's bearing of the Cross, is willingly to suffer for the Love of God, with Patience and Humility, what he must suffer whether he will or no, in the unavoidable Miseries of Human Life. That Cross will fit less heavy upon, you when you become good; fince it is only your unruly Passions that make it uneasy, by their Averseness to submit to it.

But we must not desire Riches; we must subdue our Passion for them. And is it the Desire of Riches that makes the Pleasure of them? No, 'tis what makes them full of Trouble. Is it the Love of Riches that makes the Convenience of them? and No, 'tis what makes them full of Anxiety and , and Vexation. The good of Riches confifts only in that their Use; that Use is allowed to a Christian, Life, provided it be regulated according to his Neces-Joy, fity. Is it not the Being able to use our Riches as

our Necessity requires, that makes the Convenience of em? Whatever is beyond that, is only Superfluity and Vanity; and should not we be asham'd to say that we love Riches for no other end, but because they serve to uphold a superfluous and useless Vanity.

But we must part with the Persons we love the most, and break those Chains which engage us to them. And what does the Christian Religion require of you in this, which the Care of Reputation or Inte-

rest does not daily obtain of you?

Where is the Man does not part with the Perfons who are most dear to him, when the Orders of his Prince call him to War? Who is there that does not oblige himself to be seldomer with, or perhaps to quit for ever those Perfons, whom he cannot frequent without expofing his Fortune or his Reputation? Tho' thefe be only Worldly Considerations, yet by their causing a Separation, they produce, in time, Indifference and Oblivion; and by being ablent from the Presons one loved, a Man recovers that Heart he had left with them at parting. Let the Defire of your Salvation prevail with you to do what these Worldly Motives would make you do. It will not be harder for you to quit those Persons for the Interest of your Salvation, than it was to do it for that of your Fortune, or of your Glory. And your Heart, which is still fet upon them, will perhaps return to you so much the sooner, that God will be vigilar careful to restore it you as a Reward of your contrar Courage, if you beg it of him with Faith and whereo Affurance.

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The Christian Religion has its Employments, and they appear to you too mean, or too fariguing. you any other that are of more Importance, or more agreeable? To pray to God, to make frequent Reflections on our telves, for thereforming our Hearts, to nourish our Souls with solid and instructive Reading. To labour for our own Perfection, and the Confolation of our Neighbour, are they meaner Employments than to be subjected to forc'd Civilities? than to give ones felf up the whole Day to the Torture of a hundred useless and impercinent Visits? than to go about from House to House without Business, or without Design? than to pass whole Nights in reading the Chimerical Adventures of a fabulous Hero? are they more fatiguing, than the being fix'd Night and Day to a Chair, fuffering all the Revolutions of a filent or quarrelsome Gaming, where the Head is as much exhausted as the Purse? than in passing ones Life in faying continually what shall we do, without ever finding any thing to be done? If your Employments are better or more worthy of you than these, the Christian Religion will make no Scruple of allowing them, and the Prayer and good Works it requires of you, are but Means to acquit your felf the better of your other Emf your ployments.

But the Christian Religion requires a constant and return will be vigilant Attention, not to allow our selves in any thing of your contrary to our Duty, that we may escape those Rocks h and whereon Innocence and Virtue may Split. And what does it require in this, which Ambition, or De-The cency, or Politeness do not require? Let but

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a good Man attend as much to his Conduct and Actions, as a Courtier does that would keep himself in Favour, or as one that would pass in the World for an honest Man; he will have all the Diligence that the Christian Religion requires of him. To shun some Occasions, to avoid fome Companies, to forbear fome particular Ways, are not Laws peculiar to Christianity. The World gives the same Laws to those who have a mind to gain its Favour.

There is feldom more requir'd to be a Chriflian, than to do for God, what an honest Man

does for himself, or for others.

In a Word, let a Man in cool Thoughts run over all the Christian Laws, he will find they fcarce require any thing, but what honest Men already do, or would be capable of doing, without any other Motive than that of Honesty, of Glory, of Interest, or of Repose. A Christian Motive would not render those Actions more Painful and Difficult than a Carnal Motive does: and a Man may easily conceive, that when he is capable of doing daily without Grace fuch difficult Things as the World requires of him, he will be capable with Grace to perform whatever hard and painful Obligations Religion may lay upon him.

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Groundless Prejudices Of some Religion.

When the Practice of the Christian Religion on is propos'd to Worldly People, one would think they were told of some Customs and Manners as different from the Genius of their Nation, as are those of Siam; tho' perhaps nothing is propos'd to them but what would

be agreeable.

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Men form to themselves an austere Notion of the Practice of Religion; tho' in the main, it only contains the Practice of those Duties, for which Men, as Corrupt as they are, have the greatest Esteem and Veneration: And to defire a Christian to live Christianly, is only to desire him to become fuch as he himself would have all the World to be.

If I should say to a Worldly Person, who has a noble Soul, a generous Heart, a found Judgment; in a word, Probity and Honour.

ch dif should say to him,

There are a fort of People in the World, who natever have never shock'd or offended any one, who ay lay take a Pleasure in serving and obliging every Body, and who do it with a Generofity that prevents the Requests of those who want their Affistance, who feem to have Riches only to impart them, and to improve their Talents only to be useful to others; who know not what Interest is, who never go to Law till they have fought all imaginable Ways of Accommodation; And however however advantagious the Success of their Cause might be, are ready to renounce that Advantage, could they avoid going to Law; who are always Obliging, always of an even Temper, no Cloud ever appearing to discompose the Tranquillity of their Countenance and Humour. Some are Fathers of Families, and they look upon the Care of well Educating their Children at Home, to be their chief Business; their Servants are always exactly paid, and encourage one another to render themselves worthy, by their Services and Faithfulness, of that Kindness, their Master has for them: Some of them there are, whose Employment it is to administer Justice, and there are no better Judges on the Bench than they; others are in the Army, or in the Court, and they are the best Officers the Queen has, and the Subjects, who best deserve her Considence, and the Marks of her Favour: Others, in a private Capacity, are always ready, when wanted, to do any Service that may be useful to the Commonwealth, or their Neighbour: Every one among them lives according to his Quality, and the Laws of Decency: The Conduct and Reputation of their Women, is even above the reach of Malice, not because it is Affected; on the contrary, all their Behaviour is Natural and Easie; they have the Art of Discouraging, and of making Friends of fuch as would pretend to any thing beyond that Name, without ever being expos'd to hearken to them, or to answer them; The Care of their Beauty is the least of their who a Concern, they are Jealous of nothing but their Modesty and the Decency of their Sex. Among in nee Advan thefe

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these Persons, there is no such thing as meddling with other Peoples Business; Cenforiousness is for ever banish'd from their Conversation, and if at any time one takes the Liberty of Slandering before them, they have the Art to put the Slanderer to Silence without offending him.

Such they appear to the Eyes of the World. tho' they take all imaginable care (yet without Affectation) not to appear such. But they have besides these, a thousand Virtues which the World is ignorant of: There are many poor Families asham'd to beg, who only Subsist by their Care; all their Alms are done without Noise and Ostentation; their Arms are not to be feen on the Gates of the Hospitals they have Founded, nor on the Ornaments with which they have adorn'd the Altars; what good they do, is only for God, and they are contented that God alone should know it. Their Life is perfectly well regulated, whatever Bufiness they have, they find time for Prayer, it neither renders them fad, nor fowre, and it could not be ach of perceiv'd, that they Pray'd often, but by fuch a confrant Evenness of Conduct, as cannot be kept up without Grace; in a word, they are Persons whom Rule and Precept do not render forc'd and uneasie, nor the Commerce of the World ever put into disorder; inviolable in their Promises, saithful to their Friends, Ingenious in procuring them innocent Pleasures; Persons who are always to be found, when one stands in need of them; who by their Sweetness, and Advances, disarm their most inverterate Enemies,

and have none really such, but those, who are Enemies of Innocence, Reason and Goodness.

A Man of the World, to whom I should give this Picture, could not forbear asking. Ab, who are those Persons? I would answer, they are Christians; perhaps too, he would have guess'd them before I had named them; perhaps the Age we live in, is not so entirely void of Christianity that he could not have perceived in this Description, some one of those true Christians, who is all Stations so worthily fill the Character of a Christian.

If they can be known by this Description it is a new Argument of the Injustice of those Prejudices the World has against Religion: It would be a Folly for Men, not to live a Christian Life tho' one thould give them no more than the bar Idea of Christianity; but 'tis a much greater Folly when one gives them in that Idea, the Character of Persons with whom perhaps they live, and whom, notwithstanding their Prejudices, they cannot help esteeming, as the worthiest Person they know.

Probity, but it may be said, That none has more Politeness, none more good Manners than he.

By learning never to do to others, what we would not have others do to us, we learn to be Polite.

The most certain Rule, never to be wanting in that Civility we owe to others, is to have fincere Universal Charity.

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mour of those we live among, require; 'tis to fuffer nothing to escape, either in ones Behaviour or Discourse, which does not shew, that we give to every one what is his due; 'tis even' youd that, 'tis to have a Condescention for every body; not affecting to be diffinguish'd, but on the contrary willingly yielding to others; 'tis to speak always obligingly, and act so too, when needful; 'Tis to be ready to make all the good Qualities of others, be observed, and never to boast of our own. And is not this what Charity teaches?

When a Man talks extravagantly, is rude to Women, has no regard to Decency or Custom, fets himself in Opposition to those whom he ought to Respect for their Age or Dignity, and knows not even what it is to be Modest, or to hearken to those that talk to him; we fay he does not know the World; but perhaps we might fay with more Justice, that he does not know his

Religion.

If some Persons, who practise the World much, pass for Men of very little Politeness, 'tis certainly, not for want of feeing and knowing the World; I'm rather of opinion, 'tis for want of knowing and understanding their Religion; and that their Failure in the Rules of Civility proceeds from the Irregularity of their Minds.

The Study of the World may give a Man Politeness, but that Politeness which proceeds from the Study of Religion, is much more Equal, and

more Universal.

It may be expedient for some to retire from the Hu the World, but when a Christian is oblig'd to live

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live in the World, there is an Obligation on him to observe the Rules of Civility in it.

A Christian, who lives in the World, and values himself on his Neglect of those Rules, values himself on his Vanity, or his ill Breeding.

I knew one that had the Reputation of a good Man, that valued himself, on his being unmannerly to the World; sew Persons esteem'd him for it, they pardon'd his Incivility, but did not Canonize him for it; they could have wish'd he had either been more Civil, or less in the World.

The Civility of the World, is often nothing but Vanity, that of a true Christian, is Humility, is Charity, is Zeal. The true Christian pleases, without desiring to please, the other only pleases, because he makes it his Study to do so. The one is Civil out of Principle, the other is only so by Rote and at Random.

Tis not only in Matters of Probity and Politeness Men are Prejudic'd against Christianity, they are likewise persuaded that a Christian Life is of all Lives the most dismal; but if they will reslect never so little on it, they must confess that no other Life can afford so much Tran-

quillity, and so much Pleasure.

When the Master we submit to, is Superiour to all, it sweetens the Harshness of our Submission: Nothing lessening more the Ignominy of Service, than the Dignity of the Master we serve.

To find a Master, who is always bountiful, to find has a tender Care of his Servants, and never hat Chails to reward them; mitigates all the Hardship

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Nor is a Christian's Enjoyment of Peace and Tranquillity, deferr'd till he is poffes'd of the Reward he hopes for in another Life; he finds even in the Service it felf a Reward, from the

Time he begins to Serve.

To Serve God, is to govern our felves by his Will and Commands; 'tis to submit our Passions, and our Defires, to his Soveraign Authority; 'tis to regulate our Heart, and to get the Mattery of our Inclinations, and of our Senses. We must grant, if we can find all this in the Service of God, we find in it a Remedy against the Cause of all our Troubles and Miferies; Since that which makes Men miserable in this World, is their living at Random, without any certain Rule or Conduct, their being transported by their Paffions, and perhaps yet more by their Senfes.

Let Men fancy to themselves a State of Life, that would be most agreeable to them, and if they can attain to it, and be happy in it, let them think no more of becoming Christians; but if all the Happiness we propose to our selves, be nothing but an imaginary Idea, why should not we try if Christianity does not contain some-

thing more real?

We know very well what would make us happy, is, niny of what Men every Day fay; perhaps they deer we ceive themselves in their Idea of happiness, but at least, they are certainly mistaken, if they think untiful, to find it in the World. When we tell them never that Christianity contains a true Happiness, we

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do not propose an Uncertain and Chimerical Idea to them; there is nothing that we defire more, than that they would put it to the Experimention ? ... enovment of acidem

But supposing it true, that a good Man had no more Peace in this World, than another, that the Christian Life had its Crosses and Afflions as every other Life has; would it not be still more Wife and Prudent, under a Necessity of being Unhappy in this World, to make a Virtue of that Necessity, and to chuse that State in it. by which Affliction may be faid to be Sanctified; in which the bearing unavoidable Misfortunes, has the Promise of a Bleffing, and where an Asfurance is given us of an Eternal Happiness. Supposing the Christian Life to be as dismal as the World reprefents it, as long as the Hopes of Eternal Happiness are join'd to it, I should think ir fill less dismal than the most advantagious and happy State this World can afford, without that t that hope.

'Tis Wisdom, to prefer an Eternal Happiness, to a Happiness of a short Continuance; but aster all, that is not the Matter in hand here. No Man can promise himself so much Happiness in this World, as to fay, I prefer an Eternal to Temporal Happiness; the preferring Life Eternal, to the present Life, is not the preferring thing one Happiness to another; 'tis preferring Hap Religi piness to Misery, and can any one be so void o

Sense, as to hesitate in such a Choice.

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Of the little Faith among Christians.

THE greatest part of Christians, seem to have Faith, only till they meet with fome one to persuade them out of it; they believe, as if they had a Mind not to believe, and they take up with Religion, as a Man throws himself into a desperate Party, only till an Occasion or Conveniency offers, of embracing another; 'tis their Refuge till they can do better; they hold to it, but have a watchful Eye abroad, to fpy out something that may be more agreeable.

When I hear a Courtier, or a Woman of the World, ask me feriously in private, Sir, do you opes of deally believe the Immortality of the Soul, and all that Religion teaches us. What can I think, but that they would both be very glad I should tell them that the Soul is not Immortal, and that Religion

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What makes me believe that such a Question does not proceed from a desire of being instructre. No ed, but is the effect of a fecret Inclination to deinefs in the most ferious manner imaginable, that nothing is more real, or more folidly grounded than
thing is more real, or more folidly grounded than
Religion, they will not believe me; they say,
and all the folid Reasons, with which lenforce the Truth, make less Impression on them, than the false Reasonings and Jests of a Libertine that attacks it.

A Libertine, who speaks against Religion, does it with fo little Reason, that he would never be listen'd to, if they, who heard him, had not a

defire of being as Libertine as he.

If one, who pretends to doubt of Religion, was really in doubt, that is, was as much inclin'd to believe, as not to believe, he would foon find it most reasonable to believe. But, to pretend to doubt of Religion, is commonly to have determined to have no Religion; and he, who asks, if he ought to believe or not, has al-

ready faid in his Heart, I will not believe.

It is very hard to prove the Truth of Religion, as long as Men are persuaded, that those, who argue for it, are hired to do fo, and dare not speak otherwise. This Persuasion is the greatest Obstacle to Religion, and the strongest Resuge of Impiety. But after all, nothing is more unjust, than to judge thus of those, who speak in favour of Religion. Why do you tell me, I am hired to speak thus, when all I say to you is things founded upon undeniable Principles? Be attentive to my Reasons, without examining my Motives, or at least, do not suspect my Motives till you suspect my Proofs. If your Reafon cannot answer my Arguments, why do only be you accuse me of not speaking the Truth?

To fay that a Man who speaks for Religion, maded of speaks so because he is a Priest; is, as if one lely the should say, that a Man who endeavours to con- Men the vince People of the Fidelity they owe their elves I Prince, does it only because he is a Courtier elves to What matters it, what the Man is when he onder speaks the Truth; we should only consider the

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Truth he speaks; because a Courtier is saithful to his Prince, would you suspect what he says, when he endeavours to persuade you to the same Fidelity. I should much rather believe that this Man was faithful to his Prince, because he was persuaded of the Necessity of being so; than to think that he endeavour'd to per suade People to that Fidelity, only because he was a good Courtier. This way of Reasoning is much more Just than the other.

But supposing a Man should speak in Favour of Religion, because it was his Trade to speak fo; would that be a good Reason for your doubting the Truth of what he faid? are you suspicious of any Merchandize for no other reason but that the Merchant makes a Trade of felling reatest it. And can you say, that none who make a Refuge Trade of Selling, ever fell any thing that's good? Men examine the Goods without confidering eak in whether he that fells them, has any Interest in , I am felling them; they judge of their Value by the you is things themselves, not by the Character of him that puts them off. Why should they not do the fame in examining the Truths of Religion?

But you'll say, what makes you believe that

r Reathey who speak in Desence of Religion, do it hy do only because they are hir'd to speak so, is, That only because they are hir'd to speak so, is, That bey don't seem by their Conduct to be very well persis one if one of the Truths they teach; that their Manners ely their Discourse, and that they are often no better their than others. If it be so, they condemn themelives I confess, but they only condemn themelives because they speak the Truth; by their condemning themselves, they don't justifie your

not

not believing them, and whatever their Behaviour be, if what they fay is folid and reasonable, Cert you ought to believe them. Who ever thought that Temperance and Chastity were not Virtues, but I because some of the Philosophers have been de-bauch'd? do what they say, and don't talk of since

what they do.

The Corrupt Manners of Christians, can ly on do no wrong to the Truth, but with weak or prejudic'd Persons. Truth is known by its own my o Principles, 'tis not he that teaches you the Truth I have that convinces you of it, you convince your felf of the of it, by reasoning on what he has taught you. I any (for it is always to be supposed that Grace will then not be wanting to you.) We must consude then, certain that when a Man has no Religion, 'tis because certain he will have none, and that he hardens his Light Heart either against the Truth, or against the To-Grace of God, which would enable him to see Rati the Truth.

'Tis chiefly in the Business of Religion that the resolve Understanding is the Cully of the Heart, and in in con nothing so grosly and unjustly as in this Matter, in

The Heart finds its Account in having no Religion, and the Understanding suffers it self to be imposed on in it. Is this a reasonable Conduct? did he Ought not one to examine first, ere he gives himself up to it, if he is in the right to act thus? withstand you'll say, that by the Examination of Religion, you fall into Doubts and Uncertainty. 'Tis somewhat however that you are at a stop there; and is hard perhaps nothing is a greater Proof of the Truth of Religion, than that the most incredulous to God Persons cannot, with all their Reasonings, go further than to doubt. ther than to doubt.

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No one ever did or ever will find a perfect nable, Certainty on the fide of Irreligion. Now it is nought very improbable that Men should have nothing en de tant Concern. And we may conclude, that talk of fince we find nothing but Uncertainty in the Choice of Irreligion, we can find Certainty ons, can y on that fide which is opposed to it.

when I reason on Religion, and consult only my own Arguments about it, I am uncertain, Truth I have no Demonstration, by Natural Light, our felf of the Truth of Religion; but neither have it you. I any Demonstration of its Falshood. Since will then by Natural Light I find nothing but Unthen, certainty, I must either remain all my Life un-

If the To remain in Doubts, is a State unworthy of to fee a Rational Creature; besides that, it is a most uneasy and dismal One. I ought then at least to hat the resolve to try if I cannot find more Certainty and in in confulting other Lights than my own; that

And in m consulting other Lights than my own; that Matter, s, in begging of God to enlighten me, and putting my self in a State of obtaining that Grace.

Tis very bard, says one, to have Faith. But did he ever put himself in a State of obtaining it? When a virtuous Man shall tell me, that notwithstanding all his Prayers, and the Intergrity of his Life, he has not been able to obtain Faith; some I shall then believe Men have reason to say, it is hard to have Faith. But, when I see Persons Truth wholly devoted to the World, who never Pray to God, but in a manner that renders them more go fur Criminal, who are from Morning till Night in No.

actual Sin, or in the occasion of committing it; when I fee fuch Persons complain that they cannot have Faith, I am not at all surprized at it; but I impute all the Fault to themselves.

It is difficult to have Faith, only because it is difficult to live well. A vicious Life destroys

Faith, and hinders its returning.

Nothing ought to engage Men more to lead a Virtuous Life, than the difficulty they find of having Faith. For if there is a State in which Men may find Certainty, and if this State is only that of Faith, ought not we to do all we can to find it? The Heart cannot without great Reluctancy do all that is Necessary for the finding it. But has the Understanding no Reluctancy to live thus a continued Life of Uncertainty? Why must the Heart be always contented, and the Understand ing never? Should we not endeavour to content both? Since by pleasing the Heart, we can not fatisfie the Understanding, should we no try, if by farisfying the Understanding, we can not likewise please the Heart?

Religious Men affirm, that they are in no Doubt, no Libertine can fay fo much; and ough I not at least to embrace that side, where there

is least Doubt.

A good Life is not only a certain Means of ob taining Faith, but is likewise a Means of render ing certain and evident, what is most obscure and what may be faid to be most uncertain it the Mysterious Truths of Religion.

Women, and the most part of Christians, the find i are unlearn'd, are hindred from Believing, b most the Obscurity of those things which Faith pro rity is pole them.

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T cann the I no I prehe Faith there true ; prove lands poses to them, and bow say they, can we conceive this or that?

They do not reflect, that whatever fide they take, they must believe things unintelligible. Do they believe that there is a God? If they do, they must believe a Being, who never had a Beginning, and, who has from himself all manner of Perfection; and who ever could conceive a Being of this Nature? Where is the Understanding that is not lost in the Consideration of an Eternal Being? A limited Understanding cannot conceive that which is infinite.

Will they believe there is no God, they must then believe a World that begun of it felt, and was preceeded by an Eternal Nothing, and is not this still more inconceivable?

Since then, whatever fide we take, we find Obscurity, is it not most reasonable among many things obscure, to believe those which are built on the most solid, and most evident Foundations.

There are fome things in Religion which I cannot comprehend; but if I can comprehend the Foundation on which they are built, I have re there no reason to disbelieve them. I cannot comprehend God, nor the Mysteries of the Christian sof ob Faith; but I can very well comprehend, that render there is a God, and that these Mysteries are obscure true; I need only examine the Reasons which rtain it prove them. Books are full of them, and thoufands have writ on the Truth of Religion; if I ans, the find in those Treatises, Reasons to believe the ing, b most obscure Truths of Religion, their Obscuith pro rity is not a Reason to hinder me from believing pole them. D 2

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When we require of Men to believe things incomprehensible, we require nothing else of them, but that they would do in the Matter of Religion, what they daily do in other things. They believe that the Soul reasons, and that Matter is extended, but which of them could ever comprehend how Matter is extended, or how the Soul reasons or thinks?

The difficulty of understanding either the one. or the other, does not hinder from believing them, because we have good reasons to believe them: Thus the Obscurity of some Mysteries in Religion should not hinder us from believing them, if they are establish'd on good Reasons.

All they have to do then, is to examine those Reafons, and not perplex themselves about obfoure Mysteries, since they cannot understand them; but in order to believe them, they are only to consider the Reasons which prove their Truth.

A Man that would not believe the Mysteries of Religion, because they are incomprehensible. is every whit as unreasonable as one that would not believe there is a Sun, because he could not

conceive what Light is.

But that Man, you'll fay, needs only open his Eyes to believe that there is a Sun ; and perhaps also, you need only to open your Eyes to believe there is a God: But if there is a God, there is a Providence, and Providence could never have permitted a false Religion to be supported by the most folid Reasons. These Truths, and a thousand more, are perhaps as clear as the. Day, when they are examin'd without any prejudice

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in the Understanding, or any Corruption in the Heart.

Was the Hypocondriack, who thought himfelf of Glass, a reasonable Man? No, you'll say, He was a Fool, whose Brains was disorder'd by the black Vapours, arising from his Disease, which difturb'd his Reason : And such are Libertines, as little capable of reasoning on Religion, as an Hypocondraick: For if Vice and Debauchery darken the Reason, and blind the Understanding, what fignifies it, that the Cause is different. when the Effect is the same?

A Man, who only reasons, and acts by those Ideas, which Sin and Corruption give him, differs nothing from him, who is depriv'd of the liberty of his Reason, by a black Melancholy. Cure the Disease, and a Hypocondriack will Reason right; banish Sin, and the Libertine will be Religious.

But to bid a Man leave his Sin, you'll fay, is to suppose him Vicious and Religious at the same time: How can a Libertine, that has no Religion, resolve to live a Holy Life; or can he do it without Religion?

I should not spend time to refute this Argument. if I did not know that it was objected by fome, who pass for Men Wit. But this reasoning is as wretched as that of a Sick Man's, who should fay, that to take any Medicine, a Man must be in good Health.

A Christian, who had received the Grace of Faith, with Baptism, is only a Libertine, because that Faith is weaken'd by his Affection to Sin. He is fuch a Sick Person, as may yet be recover'd

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by Medicines. He can withdraw from the occasions of Sin; especially, if he begins with beging Grace of God, without which he can do nothing. Then his Faith will be awaken'd, or at least he will become capable of understanding the Reasons on which Faith is grounded, and the injustice of that Prejudice, and Infatuation that made him a Libertine.

The greatest part of those, to whom we would prove the Truth of Religion, are like Men, who having form'd a design in their Head, call their sons Family and Friends together, to refolve with them what they shall do. Every body represents evide to them the Inconvenience of fuch a Design. rish is Yes Gentlemen, fay they, you are in the right, but we which will do bowever what we have resolved on: Just so sterie does the Libertine, he is overwhelm'd with Rea- Belie fons which convince him of the Extravagance of scure, his Libertinism; he hears them, he knows not ledge what to answer to them, but he will still be a scure Libertine.

Others make a Circle which they never gerreafor out of. They begin by telling you, that it is obscur impossible for them to believe things incompre lieve hensible; you are two hours in proving to them that if the Foundation of that Belief be folid, i bis ou is unreasonable to disbelieve them. You shew that no them evidently the Solidity of this Foundation have of and after all, they return to what they beguidone i with, and again say to you, Ab, how can we be cause I lieve things inconceivable? It is impossible to makerent In any Progress in the Knowledge of Truth, whetrue, is Men will obstinately persist in their Ignorancethat sy and Prejudices; nor is this the peculiar Cafe d'is ou

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Religion, 'tis the same in all other kinds of Learning; there is no other Science or Art a Man can learn, if he will be always returning to his first Prejudices.

'Tis to render it impossible for one to have Faith, to require an Evidence for every thing it contains, or rather 'tis to be ignorant what Faith 'Tis not the Evidence of its Articles I ought to require, but the Evidence of their Truth, and their Truth is evident, when I have evident Rea-

fons to believe they are reveal'd.

1 their To pretend to render the Mysteries of Faith e with refents evident, is not to destroy Impiety, but to nou-Design. rish it : All the Representations and Similitudes, Just fo steries, do frequently serve only to weaken the Rea. Belief of them. Let us grant, that what is obance of scure, is obscure; but let us likewise acknowws not ledge, that the Belief of every thing that is obevident Foundation: We must keep to that, no yer ge reasonable Man can disbelieve a thing for being at it i obscure, when he has sufficient Reasons to beompre lieve it.

othem But could not God, fome will say, have explain'd olid, i his own Meaning, and render'd his Words so clear, u shewthat no body could have mistaken them? God could dation have done it indeed, but he is Mafter, he has not beguidone it, and that for good Reasons: To say, bewe because his Words are obscure, and liable to diffeo makerent Interpretations, that therefore they are not , whetrue, is a ridiculous Conclusion. Since it is God orancethat speaks, there must be Truth in his Words, Cafe d'tis our part then, to endeavour to discover it,

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and the more his Words are obscure, the mone ought we to petition for Grace to understand them.

But after all, who tells you, that the Obfcurity you find in the Word of God, proceed from that Word, and not from your own Pre-

judices.

Let a Command be never to clear, a Man who has no Mind to obey, will find it dark and obscure. He will endeavour to explain the most clear and peremptory Words to his own advantage, for the justifying his Disobedience. It is just so with the Word of God, perhaps no body would find it dark, if the Sense of it was always favourable to our Inclinations, perhaps it is obfcure, only because we will not understand it. A least, that we may know whence this Obscuring proceeds, let us endeavour to free our felves from all Prejudices. St. Paul found no longer any Obscurity in the Words which our Lord spake to him, when once he had renounc'd his Prejudices and had put himself into a Disposition of doing all that God requir'd of him.

A Person who is without Passions, Humble and Virtuous, finds less Obscurity in the Word of God, than a Doctor that's Proud, or a Woman

devoted to the World.

To fay, that God should have spoke more clearly, is, in the Sense of most who say so, to say, that he should have favour'd our Pride, or our Lusts.

God has spoke clearly for the Humble, and the Good Man, endeavour to be like them, and perhaps, you will then no longer find, that Obscurity

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and the and per-Obscurity rity in the Word of God you complain of, or at least perhaps you will find in it, things clear enough to assist you in the Understanding those which are obscure.

When God has once spoke to me, I may be sure that he design'd to be understood, 'tis not to him therefore I ought to ascribe that Obscurity I find in his Word, it must needs come from another Source; and since I have the greatest Interest in the World to understand the Word of God aright, I ought to spare nothing to discover whence this Obscurity proceeds.

They tell me it proceeds from my Corruption, and my Sins; I am therefore under an indispensable Obligation, to examine if they are in the right, when they tell me so; and since I cannot be a proper Judge of that, but by becoming a Virtuous Man, I have a very great Interest to become so.

If a German should settle at the Court of France, and desir'd to make himself agreeable there, he would not think it enough to learn the French Language; he would Study besides, to form himself to the French Manners. However, well he understood the Language, if he went no surther, there are a thousand things he wou'd either be ignorant of, or take in a wrong Sense, because there are a thousand things express'd with half a Word, which one can understand, only so far as he has the Genius and Temper of the Country.

It is just so, (if I may be allow'd to use this Comparison) with the Dispositions necessary to understand the Word of God. 'Tis not enough to understand the Language, one must have, if

I dare

I dare use the Expression, the Genius and Temper which God requires of those to whom he speaks; without which, however well vers'd, they may be in the Terms by which he expresfes himfelf, they will but ill understand him, and take a thousand Things in a wrong Sense. The Genius and Temper which God requires, are the Submiffion of the Understanding, and Purity of Life. He that has neither of these will understand the Word of God as little as a German would the Language of the Court, who knew nothing of France but the French Language.

If a Courtier (to use still the same Comparifon) should undertake to make this German ac. have quainted with the French Court, he would not had a only give him Lessons of it, but would carry Senti him sometimes to Court, and endeavour to Confi make him acquire the Genius of it, by practifing one of

'Tis just so with Faith, if we content our selver unput with giving Lessons of it to those who have no call of Faith, we shall advance but little. We must disconsist pose them to suffer themselves to be guided, and of Sel give them if I may fo speak, the Genius of Faith by the Practice of those Virtues it teaches.

All Men have a natural Bent to believe Religical In gion. To fay that this Inclination is the Effect I ki of the Prejudices of Education, is to say, the believe the Horror Men have of Murder or Incest, it to say the likewise an Effect of the same Prejudices. have no reason to believe that the Horror I have Decemple of certain Crimes, is bester grounded, than the that the Horror I have of Irreligion: And if I can bring Chance my self to believe that the one comes from Edu must experience of the company self to believe that the one comes from Edu must experience of the company self to believe that the one comes from Edu must experience of the company self-than the compan

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cation, I shall believe that the other proceeds from it too; And he that can count Irreligion as nothing, will likewife count Incest and Parri-

cide nothing.

Tho' Experience did not daily prove that there is no Goodness without Religion, it were easy to prove it by the Comparison may be made (and in which we can find no Difference) between the Disposition which inclines us to Religion, and that which we have for Virtue. For, once more, if the Reluctance I have to Irreligion, proceeds only from the Education I have receiv'd, I shall believe with as much reason that I have no Horror of Parricide, but because I have ld not had a good Education. Thus in destroying the Sentiments of Religion, we destroy, by a plain our to Consequence, the Sentiments of all Virtue. one can come to have no Religion, he will eaactifing fily come to have no Virtue, when he can go r felver unpunish'd for having none. And all that we have no call Goodness, will only be Decency, or a Ne-nust disceffity grounded on the love of Peace, and care ed, and of Self-Preservation.

Faith And that's the very thing you'll fay, the Libertines pretend, that Religion is only a Politiwe Reli cal Institution, and all Virtue only Decencies.

Effed I know very well they fay this; but before we y, the believe them, we must see the Reasons they have to fay fo; before they affirm that Religion is only Policy, and Virtue nothing but Rules of r I hay Decency, they must prove that there is no God. than the that the World form'd it self, and is govern'd by an brin Chance: For here it is they must begin, they must establish Principles before they draw Conclusions:

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clusions; and as long as their Principles are Doubtful, I shall believe at least that the Conclusions are so too. But where is the Libertine who will ever be able to prove that there is no God, and that the World form'd it felf alone

The way to ftop the Mouth of Libertines is, to oblige them to prove their Principles; the may fay and prove too if you pleafe, by the Manners of Christians, that Religion is only Policy, as long as they speak without Principles I have no reason to believe them.

But then, will some say here, the Christian who argues for Religion must likewise prove hi Principles. I grant it, The Principles of Chri flians are. That there is a God who made Man and gave him Laws, Oc.

Now between believing that there is a God and believing that there is none, it were eafy determine which I should adhere too, if I would affent to that Principle which has the best Rea fons on its fide: And to convince an Atheift. would only defire of him that he would ferious begin to examine these two Principles before h draws his Consequences. But that is not the way, they do not begin to reason on the Prin ciples, till after they have endeavour'd to per fuade themselves of the Conclusions. They don fay there is no God, therefore Religion is only a Politick Institution; but they say Religion nothing but Policy, therefore there is no Go I ask if this be a right way of reasoning?

Christians do not reason after this manner before they conclude that Religion is true, the are convinc'd that there is a God. An Atheir ly Pol

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les are sonly a doubtful Principle, that of a Christian certain. bertine

But is that Principle certain, you'll say, and do to Christians really doubt of it? To this I shall analone wer nothing but what I have faid already, beme a Christian, exercise their Virtues, enby the race for that end, and after that you will is only dge if a Christian is in Doubt; till then you nciples ill not believe me on my Word, and the Matr is of Consequence enough to be well worth hristia our putting your felf in a Condition to judge it.

> We must then conclude that the greatest Err in Religion, is leading a finful and vicious fe. For when Mens Vices bring them to diflieve, they fall into thar Absurdity I have ention'd, of determining without Principles, of making the Conclusions preceed the Prinples.

And if they keep their Faith, whilst they conferious nue in their Sins, they fall into an Absurdity before heat less than the other, at once to believe, and not the quite conttary to what they believe.

An Atheist deceives himself in saying Religion to per only a Political Invention, and therefore there n is on mielf as much as he, in faying there is a God, d yet living as if Religion was nothing but no Go plicy.

manner I know not if these two States differ much, to I know that one does not continue long in e latter, and that by living as if Religion was ally Policy, a Man persuades himself at last

that

that it is really nothing elfe; and by often per- Noti faading himself of it, he concludes with the Atheist that there is no God. If he does not fay it absolutely, he says it tacitly, at least according ider to Occasions; and a Man, for Instance, who be ing out of the Occasion of sinning, says there is fian a God, will fay the contrary when a Temptation presents: If it was not so, I know not if a Man could ever resolve upon committing a Sin, and delit I doubt that in an Intrigue, either of Crimina Gallantry, or of Injustice, the Christian think not I or believes otherwife, than the most impiou cause Libertine.

In fine, fince a Man can have no greater Inte gular rest than to know and to be convinc'd whethe think Faith be true or not; since it is the Gist of God on the and what he cannot obtain by his own reason of Will Condition to obtain it: And since he cannot obtain it as long as he lives in Sin, he must eithe that Coresolve never to have it, or to change his Cours ans an area. of Life.

There is no vicious Christian who does no Infide confess that if his Faith were stronger, he should 'Tis Faith we want, is the Languag live better. of all Sinners.

To own that we could live better if we had of the more Faith, and not to do all we can to obtain Faith, is to resolve never to live better.

What can be the Cause that a Christian h not Faith enough to lead a holy Life? He to TI pose him besides instructed in the Obligations how ho ke Faith lays on him. What is wanting to him then nor the

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Nothing but to reflect on the Obligations his Faith ays on him, and to be willing to discharge them. Tis not Faith that he wants, if we contording ider rightly, it is only the Will to live piously. The Cause of their Irregularities. But

ptation it might be faid with much more Justice, that a Man their Irregularities are the Cause of their Inst-

Christians would not confess that they have think not Faith enough to lead a holy Life, but beimpion cause they dare not own that they have not he Will to do it. They charge their Irrethe will to do it. They charge their irreter Interpolation of God by the state of Faith, because they
whether hink they can say that Faith does not depend
of God by them; they do not impute it to their want
reason of Will, because they know very well that our
will is in our own Power.

But in reality, the true meaning of this Saying,
that Christians have no Faith; is, that Christians are vicious,

If there were no Sinners, there would be no

If there were no Sinners, there would be no

f we had Of the False Ideas Christians have of the Duties of their Religion.

Here are a great many Christians that have we super the Faith, but there are many more, sations have who know neither the Order, nor the Character, nor the Importance, nor the Worth of the Vir-Nothing tues which Faith requires.

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Some Christians are accounted to have a great deal of Faith, who have only a great deal of Superstition; and many have acquir'd the Reputation of being Religious, in neglecting every thing that is effential to Religion.

On what Occasion is it usually said that a Man is very Religious? Is it when he is exact in pay. ing his Debts? When he applies himself to difcharge the Duties of his Calling? When he takes Care of the Education of his Children, and of has I the Instruction of his Servants? When he is never tains at Variance with any one? No! Then he paf Calli ies only for an honest Man. But when he un Chur dertakes a Pilgrimage, enters into some devout or on Society, is constantly at Publick Prayers, and pity, fasts often, &c. Then they cry up his Piety. lo cal

They who admire the Piety of a Christian Dutie for such small Matters, are as ignorant of the Oblimse ligations of Religion as he is.

To perform stedfastly those Duties first men practis tion'd, it requires a great deal of Religion; to die wi do the others, a little Use and Habit alone wil themse often fuffice.

A Christian who is very Religious, is he that distract is wanting in nothing of what Religion come on't k mands him.

or tho The Christian Religion commands two essento chu tial Things, To love God above all things, and your of to love our Neighbour as our felves. All theintreat other Duties it ordains, are only means for the ponty better Discharging of these two: But frequently of the F. Christians neglect those two, and only think of thate I A M discharging the others. Toid one

To oblige our selves to be every Day at t deal Church, to tie our selves to certain Prayers and certain good Works, are they religious Virtues? eaing Yes, if we look upon those Prayers, and those good Works, as necessary means of acquiring the a Man Love of God, and that of our Neighbour; on pay, therwise they are either Superstition, or Illu-

How can we call that Man a Christian who has Enemies whom he will not see? Who deains what is another's Right? who neglects his he passed and his Family, and yet perhaps is either he un Church-Warden, or Overseer of the Poor, devout or one of the first in the Catalogue of a Fraters, and nity, or of a Religious Society: We ought not ety. To call him a Christian unless he engages in those hristian Duties, to obtain of God the Grace to acquit the Ob himself of others more Important.

There are many who pass their whole Life in ft men practifing the means to acquire Virtue, and who on; to die without having acquir'd it; they confine one wil themselves to the Means, and neglect the End.

You are desir'd to take upon you the Admihe that istration of what belongs to the Poor, but you on come con't know how to manage you own Concerns, or those of your Children. They have a mind o essen to chuse you Governour of an Hospital, whilst ngs, and your own House is in Disorder and Confusion.
All the intreat them to chuse another, and don't take s for the pon you to manage the House or the Goods equently of the Poor, till your own House and your own think of thate be in Order.

A Man full of Zeal, and good Intentions, Thid once to a Lady of the World. Madam, you ought to be of the Affembly of the Ladies of Charity, you ought to go sometiuses and serve the Poor in the Hospital, and endow a Service in such a Chappel. This is not what a zealous Man ought to say to a Lady of the World, before he advises her to that, he should instruct her in the Obligations she lies under of taking away the Scandal and the Disorders of a Worldy Life.

When a zealous Man would persuade a worldly Christian to undertake what they call pious Practices, he ought always to inform him that those pious Practices are not desir'd of him, but as Means or Engagements to practise the solid and

effential Virtues of Christianity.

One talking to me of a certain Person whom I knew to have been very debauch'd, told me he was now become a good Man. Ah! if it be so, cry'd I, with a great deal of Joy, he willsthen have taken home his Wife, and put away the Woman he kept in her stead, he will have lessen'd his Expences to pay his Debts, for those were Scandals publickly known. I understood he had done none of these things, and only pass'd for a good Man because he had enter'd into one of the Religious Societies.

That which hinders Christians from practifing the essential Virtues of Religion, is their being too easily satisfied with the Practice of others, less important; and he whom I speak of, usually answer'd to those who would represent to him his loose and debauch'd Life; What reason have you to complain Gentlemen, I am one of the Societ; What this Man said jeeringly, or impiously, others say in earnest; and sew Christians know wherein true Christian Virtue consists.

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r being ters, less usually to him Societ; affly, o-

s know No. Nothing is a Christian Virtue that is not done according to Order, and to speak strictly, Christian Virtue consists only in Order.

The Order in which Christian Virtue consists, is to put every Virtue and every Duty we pra-

dise in its due place.

A wicked Man who enters into a Society of good Men without Repentance, or a defire of Repentance, does not practife a Virtue. He is not in his Place; before he appears in a Religious Assembly, he ought to rank himself among the Penitents.

A Woman who has a Heart full of the Love of the World, or of Self-Love, and gives her felf up to Contemplation, does not practife a Virtue: She is not in the Order she ought to be, she should first meditate on her Sins, and weep for them, before she offers to contemplate Virtue.

A Mother who for Interest falls out with her Children, will not suffer them to be in the House with her, and can hardly bear the sight of them, who yet frequents the Church, communicates once a Week, and joins in all the good Works that are done in her Parish, is not for all that a true Christian; her Communicus and her good Works are not according to Order, and all she does will be no Virtue in her, till she shall first love and receive her Children.

The first Duty of a Magistrate is to discharge his Office; of a Soldier to acquit himself of the Obligations of his Station; of a Father to take care of his Family; if they engage in other Duties before they acquit themselves of these, they

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act contrary to Order, and all their Virtues are useless and frivolous.

A Christian who retires from the World, and still keeps his Office, retains an Obstacle to his Persection; as long as he keeps his Office he must discharge the Duty of it. A Christian Judge is not allow'd to leave his Place empty on the Bench, he must either put another in his Place or else fill it himself.

The same may be said of other Offices and Employments; they who retire from the World, and still keep their Places, that they may keep the Salaries of them, are not in their Order. They ought not to take the Salary of a Place, unless

they discharge the Duty of it.

The first Character a Virtue ought to have to be a true Christian Virtue, is that it proceed from a Spirit submitted to the Authority of God, and of the Church. You resuse to submit your self to the Church, and your Life is sull of good Works: Your good Works are not Christian Works, they have not the Character of them.

The first Christian Virtue is Charity; you are Chast and Devout, but you are Censorious, you will not see your Relations, you hate your Enemies. Your Devotion and your Chastity are

no Christian Virtues.

The first Duty of a rich Man is not to give Alms, 'tis to pay his Debts, and to restore whatever he possesses that does not belong to him. The Poor load you on one Hand with Blessings, but on the other, your Creditors cry out against you. In this Case you should only attend to the Cries of your Creditors, for your Alms

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Alms, while your Debts are unpaid, are no Christian Alms.

The first Obligation of a Sinner, is, to beg of God the Grace of Repentance, and Conversion. You live in Sin, and you ask of God the Gaining of a Law Suit, or Recovery of a Sickness; your Prayers are not in their Order, they are not Christian Prayers. You are not allow'd to sk any thing but Grace, whilst you continue in Sin.

The first Duty of Christian Zeal, is to be Zealous for ones telf. You are full of Imperfections and of Sins, and you set up for the Resorming of others; you are continually lamenting their Corruptions, every where inveighing against their Disorders, and full of a holy Disquiet and Zeal, your whole Endeavours are to make others perfect. Your Zeal is no Christian Zeal.

The first Virtue God requires of those, who he at Variance, is Reconciliation and Peace. You hate your Enemies, and wish their Detruction, and you are continually at Church. You should stay at home, unless you come to hurch, to beg of God that Virtue, without which, all your others will be useless to you.

A Lady, who has quarrell'd with her Neighours, and all her Family, runs to Church, when he Bell rings on a Holy Day, and is afraid she build not be there at the beginning of Prayers. she will not be reconcil'd, she will always ome too soon; how urgent soever she may be to ear Prayers, she has a more urgent Obligation ofce, and to forgive her Enemies.

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Christian Virtue, consists in Order and Regularity, and the Life of most Christians is a misplacing of all the Virtues: There are some Chast, fome Pious, some Charitable to the Poor, some Patient, some constant Observers of the Fasts, and the publick Worship; but even of these, there are few, who are truly Christians, because they do not practife those Virtues in the Order and h wherein God has placed them.

But, neither is it enough to practife Christian Virtues in the Order that God has prescrib'd, to make them truly Christian, they must, besides, Heave

be animated with a Christian Spirit.

The Will of God ought to be the Rule of and ha them, the Defire of pleafing God should be the he is a

Spirit and Soul of them.

The Principal Business of a Christian then, is, to know the Will of God, and before you praclife a Virtue, you ought to be affur'd that God bour,

would have you practife it.

All the Essential Virtues, are equally com. A C manded to all Christians, every Christian is ob Conscilig'd to love God, and his Neighbour. But all the govern Means by which these Virtues may be practis'd. A Pare not equally commanded to all. God lead Truths fome by one way, and others by another.

Few Study to know the way by which God Religi

would lead them.

Most Christians neglect the Virtues that God heart has prescrib'd them, and only study to imitate creating the Virtues of others. the Virtues of others.

A Citizen's Wife, whom God has limited to Hov the obseure Virtues of her Station, will practife ipplauthe shining Virtues that God requires from Labecaus

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dies of Quality; She leaves her Family to run elsewhere; She robs her Children of their Fortune to Coach it about, distributing Alms in Prisons and Hospitals.

Fasts, A Man whom God has plac'd in an Eminent these, Station, to pacific Differences, and to gain the considence of the People, by opening his House A Man whom God has plac'd in an Eminent Order and his Table to them, shuts both the one and

the other, to live like a Monk.

A Priest, who by his Character, is Essentialb'd, to y oblig'd to teach his Neighbour the way to besides, Heaven, employs himself in nothing but the Prophane Sciences. He knows Cicero and Horace, Rule of and has scarce read either the Gospel or St. Paul; be the he is a fine Wit, and an ignorant Divine. It is no more allowable for a Priest to be nothing but a

hen, is, Wit, than it is allowable for him to be Ignorant.

A Monastick, who owes nothing to his Neighat God bour, but his Prayers, comes out of his Retire-

ment, to give him his Advice.

y com. A Confessor, who ought only to govern the is ob Conscience of his Penitents, takes upon him to all the govern their House.

A Preacher, who ought to be warrant of the d lead Truths he advances, and to understand at least what he would teach others, has left off Studying ch God Religion when he begun to Preach; he employs all his time in tiring himself with Learning by at God heart Sermons compos'd long ago, and in reimitate creating himself with vain Conversations, or Diversions yet more vain.

hited to How many great and illustrious Virtues are practife pplauded in the World, which God condemns,

om La because he does not require them.

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You ought to account nothing a Virtue in you but such as God requires of you, with respect to your Calling and your Station.

He, who would be perfect in the Virtues of his Station, will have no time left to practife

others.

When it is faid, that Goodness consists in uni ting all the Virtues, and that the Defect of one alone hinders one from being a good Man; it is not meant, that a Christian must practise all forts of Virtues to be a good Man; it is only meant, that he ought to practife all the Virtue of his Station.

But, it is not only by the Station wherein God has plac'd you, that you ought to judge of the Virtues in which your Perfection confifts but likewise by the different Circumstances of your Condition, and of your Fortune.

If you are in Advertity, the first Virtue that God requires of you in that State, is Patience tho' you had all the other Virtues, if that is

wanting, you are not a true Christian.

'Tis not the Greatness, or the Beauty of an The Action that makes the Worth of it; 'tis the Or

der of God, and your Obedience.

Those whom God has limited to obscure Vir mark tues, have scarce less Difficulty to forgive him H that Disposition, than those whom he has limited would to a narrow Fortune, have to forgive him the how Obscurity, and the Meanness of their Condition that Every one thinks himself fit to fill the great Sta- Ener tions in the World, and they do not think themselves less fit to practise illustrious Virtues; but this respe last Illusion is both more subtle and more inevita- is of

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ble, than the other. No body applauds those. who being meanly Born, will live like great Lords; but there are few Christians, who are knowing enough to judge, that the Practice of great Virtues, is not always to be applauded.

God makes no account of those Virtues into

which Men intrude themselves.

There are (it is faid) fome Virtues that are Precepts, and there are others which are only Counsels; 'tis true; but one ought not to take upon him to follow the Counfels, till he has

discharg'd the Precepts.

'Tis commonly faid, that the Counfels are neglected or despis'd by Christians; but I believe, if we take things rightly, the Counfels are yet less neglected than the Precepts. find more Christians, who give Alms liberally, than we find who forgive their Enemies; and I tue that wish I could say, that there are in Christendom, as many true Christians as there are Monasticks.

that is The Vanity of Christians, makes them often more inclin'd to the Counfels, than the Precepts. of at They think they shall not be distinguish'd by the Or doing precisely what they are oblig'd to do, they will go beyond that, to make themselves Re-

ure Vir markable.

give him How many Counsels are there, that Men s limited would like better to practise than Precepts; and him the how liberal would they be in giving Alms, if by indition that they might be exempted from loving their reat State.

The fide which we wish God had taken, with the but this respect to certain Counsels, and certain Precepts,

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strice Observers of some Virtues, which are only Counsels; and negligent of those which are absolutely Commanded. Nay, we go further, and persuade our selves sometimes, that by the exact performance of a Virtue, which is only a Counsel, we may be dispens'd with from observing another that is a Precept. When a Christian thinks with the Pharisee, I am not as other Men are, he speaks and acts like him too, because he fasts twice a Week, he despises the Publican. There are Christians that Fast every Friday, and nevertheless go to Law unjustly, and live in Criminal Engagements. Can they believe their Fasting will avail them before God, as long as they do not take Care, on the other Hand, to discharge the Essential Duties of their Religion.

How gross soever the Blindness of those appears, who believe they may be excus'd from the Effential Obligations of Religion, for the fake of fome good Works; 'tis yet a very common

one among Christians.

To judge of Religion, by the Conduct of most Christians, who pass for the strictest Obfervers of it, one would think that the Christian Religion requir'd nothing but a little Exactness in performing the Precepts of the Church.

How many Houses are there of Christians, where no other Christianity is to be found, than Fasting on Fridays, and going to Church on What other fign of Reli-Sundays and Holidays. gion pray do Worldly People give: Nay, fome there are, who have not even these Marks of Christianity; they have nothing of a Christian, but the Baptism, and the Name.

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To see how much assaid some Ladies are of staying from Church on Holidays, and how little scrupulous of ruining their Neighbour's Reputation, one must think they look on the Command of going to Church, as of much more Importance, than the Precept of Charity. These Ladies do not understand their Religion.

Some Christians are so very exact in certain outward Duties of Religion, that they would not fail in the performance of them, whatever might happen. I commend this Exactness; but if they would have me believe it to be a Mark of their Religion, I must see them as exact in the Duties of Charity, and Solid Piety, as in those others; else I shall be apt to think that Exactness, is ei-

ther Superstition, or Vanity.

We must not measure Virtue by Custom, by the Times, the Humour we are in, nor even by our Inclination or Fervour; but by the Command of God, whose Will is, that at all Times, and in all Places, we should love him above all things, and our Neighbours as our selves.

But it would feem by the way Christians live, that the God they adore, was only a God of certain Days.

There are some Days, in which they are devout, fervent, and recollected; there are others in which they are cold, negligent, and diffipated.

Though God has appointed certain Days, in which he will be more particularly Serv'd, there are none in which he would be more particularly Lov'd. God will have us Love him all the Days, and all the Moments of our Life; and

'tis only to his outward Worship he has Consecrated certain Days; yet the greatest part of Christians, seem at most to be Christians, only on those Days; They resolve on Good Friday, and at Easter, to pardon those Enemies, on whom they Revenge themselves a Fortnight after.

Frailty is in some the Cause of these Inequalities, and Inconstancies; but in the most, 'tis the salse Idea they have of God, and Religion.

We lament the stupid Superstition of the ignorant People, who fancy certain Holidays, certain Ceremonies, and certain Practices to be Mysterious, and that all Religion consists in them; but such stupid Ignorants, are to be found even among the most Polite; and I doubt whether the Ignorance of Religion be greater among the Meanest of the People, than among those of higher Rank.

The greatest part of Christians, while they think to become good, grow only Superstitious.

A Defire to please God, is the Soul of Christian Virtue; 'tis God alone, whom we ought to have in view, in all the good Works we do; and a Christian has only begun to live like a Christian, from the Day he begun to forget what the World judges and thinks of him.

A Sign, that most Christians have not always God in view, in their Practice of Virtue; is their Exactness in performing those Duties which are Publik, and Conspicuous, and their Negligence of those which are hidden and private.

Example; but there are some Christians, who

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ol. I we nothing of a Christian, but their Care to pear Christians. A good Example is their onfe-only Virtue, all their other Virtues have a re-ect to that.

Yet, this is not always out of Hypocrifie, 'tis en an effect of their Blindness; Men flatter em with being perfect, because they appear to fo; and they come to persuade themselves. at they are fuch.

How many great Men have been admir'd by e World, who had never thought of appear-Virtuous, if they had not been ambitious of

coming great Men.

The more the World applauds your Virtues, e more you ought to fear, that you have no tue but what the World admires. Those Vires which make one a Christian, are chiefly own to God alone, and you can only think ur felf a true Christian, when you have reato judge, that God will find you fuch. You It judge your felf by those Virtues he comnds you; not by those which the World eems in you.

Because the World judges of Piety, by the t-fide, most of those, who would be good, ntent themselves with the sole Appearance of

The Approbation the World gives to some flons, who have a Name of being Good, is Argument to them that they are fo, and a onger Argument than all, one can fay, to eve that they are not. Why will not fuch a pman be perfuaded to fee, and to love her ildren? 'Tis because an easie Director or

complaifant Friends, believe her, or at leaf or H

complaifant Friends, believe her, or at least or H proclaim her to be Virtuous without it.

Tis not only against the Advice of true and he W honest Preachers or Directors, this easte Approbation, that is given to the out-side of Virtue, production, that is given to the out-side of Virtue, production, that is given to the out-side of Virtue, production, that is given to the out-side of Virtue, production, that is given to the out-side of Virtue, product with the Conscience. There is no Mother so very ignorate to love her Children; but when once a Mi Persection of the Obligations of Christianity, as not which be convinced in her Conscience, that she ough fews to love her Children; but when once a Mi Persection of being Devout, she can't believe but the gnoral she is so; she does not say, I ought to love her Children, before I can be Devout; but she says, I at once Devout, therefore I may hate my Children?

How Extravagant soever this Language my sanno seem, 'tis notwithstanding very common: The leave of the control of the contr

wout Perions with to much Calmnels be Reveng Jannot ful, Covetous, or Censorious.

When a Man is once strongly posses during the same of the an Opinion, that he is a Good Man, he can be seen his very Disorders, and his Vice to know If such a one did not believe his Devotion gates him him a Privilege to reform his Neighbour, hone the would not Scandalize the World so much, bersuad taking upon him to give Advice to those, whoust him do not ask him, and by Exclaiming against the In a least Shadow of Disorder he sees in others.

Every Virtue that is founded on Prejudic ove the the Esteem of the World, on Custom, Vanishonder

at leaf or Humour, is an imaginary Virtue. Nothing

at lease r Humour, is an imaginary Virtue. Nothing s a Christian Virtue, but what is regulated by true and he Will of God, and a Desire to please him.

Approbable But we frequently deceive our selves, even in the passence of the please God, and the salfe Ideas the passence of the please God in those things as not which are positively against his Laws. The me ough sews thought they did God good Service by the a Miresteau the Christians: They knew not the Reput Christian Religion, but there are Christians as but the gnorant in this as the sews.

I love to the Law of Christian Charity obliges us to ays, I a tonceal the Sins of our Neighbour, unless we have Authority to make them publick when we age me annot otherwise Correct them. Yet there are in: The two Persons, who have an Opinion of their own as a sound Authority to correct others.

It was got and Authority to correct others. They de The Vices of others are not to be made Pubould Dick, but when one that has Authority to do it, Reveng cannot otherwise correct them; but he, who has not the Power to correct them, believes at the case Before we endeavour to please God, we ought his Vice to know what will please him, and what displeation gates him; but that is what we Study little; and abour, herefuade himself, that whatever displeases him, one, we ought to be persuaded, that we have no true Idea of Religion, as long as we prejudic ove the Vices and Irregularities which Religion, Vanis ondemns.

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A Woman, who has never been able to practife nours, the least Self-denial, and who, notwithstanding on of her great Appearance of Devotion, nourishes an ures hi Eternal Softness and Idleness, is not capable of having a just Idea of the Virtues of Religion, She will reckon none Christian Virtues, but such as favour either her Softness, or her Sloth. She will be Virtuous, provided every thing fucceeds with her and pleases her.

'Tis the same with our other Dispositions, Of the One, who is of a fiery and turbulent Nature, will believe that Christian Virtue consists in the Agitation and the Motions of a vehement Zeal.

Our Lord would have faid in vain, that none was fit for the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that knew how to deny himself, if one could be a on, an Christian, by following his Humours or Inclinations.

When it is faid, that God proportions his Graces to our Tempers and Genius, it is not meant, that he allows us to follow the one, or their R the other, when they are irregular. He permits wen be us at most, to retain only what there may be good in them, he corrects, he fanctifies our Inclinations; but one must do great Violence to lood, himself, before his Inclinations can be corrected and fanctified. Sloth will always be a ly ru Vice as long as it is Sloth, and Anger will ne. his Ch ver please God, as long as it is Anger.

Tho' God does not require of every one, Virtues of the same Character, yet he requires of every one, an equal Sanctity.

The only true Christian then, is he, who wes, a neither follows his Inclinations, nor his Hu-ples, ar mours

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practife nours, nor Custom, nor Times, nor the opinishes an ares his Actions, and his Conduct, by the Laws f the Gospel, and of Religion only, and looks ble of ligion, tpon it as his chief Duty to know them, and to ut fuch study them.

sitions. Of the little Care Christians take to Study their Religion.

t none THE Science of Religion, is, of all Sciences, that which requires the greatest Applicatihe that which requires the greatest reprint the that which requires the greatest reprint the many sharpfelves the least to the only Scipply themselves the least to; 'tis the only Scince they think they know without having Studid it.

Ask the most part of Christians, if they know heir Religion, they will tell you Tes, and will ne, or ven be furpriz'd, you should doubt of it. Ask hem where they have learn'd it, they can only ledge the Imperfect Instructions of their Childnce to good, and some Sermons they have heard from e cor- me to time, or some Books they have superficis be a ly run over. To wonder that Christians of his Character should go astray, is to be astoish'd, that a Man should wander in a Country e never knew, but by the Map.

> Men take for a Knowledge of Religion, a cerain Habit they have got of practifing fome Virues, and shunning some Vices, without Princiles, and without Rule, sometimes practising one

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Virtue, fometimes another, according to their Inclination or Interest.

The Number of Christians, who know not ant, fig the Truth, is much greater than of those who ut it of

act against the known Truth.

Most People know but half of the Virtue they So f practife, or of the Vice they shun; 'tis this is ou which renders the Practice of Virtues, and the Christi Forbearance of Vices, so imperfect.

Why are the most part of Devout Persons for Imperfect? Why is a Vindictive Person averse to sacrifice his Resentment? 'Tis be Religio cause the one has but a confus'd Idea of Devoti. Vit, b

on, and the other of Revenge.

Paffions blind us 'tis true; but frequently they only compleat a Blindness which Ignorand had begun. A Christian well instructed in, and well perfuaded of his Religion, gives himfel much more unwillingly up to his Paffions, that another. He yields to them, only by little and ool, little, but the other is hurried away by them once.

To be well Instructed in, and well Persuade of our Religion, is a Bridle to our Passions, and

a Means to deliver us from them.

A fign that Mens Irregularities are all begun my R by Ignorance, is, that when we would recove offrue any one from a finful State, or prevent his fall ling into it, we naturally begin with faying How Ab! What are you going to do, and what have you done? To ask a Man what he's going to do, or ecause. what he has done, when he would commit Sin Il our or has done it, is to tell him, that he is ignorand; we of it. of it. Ti

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Prejudices against Religion, &c.

'Tis thought this Axiom, Every Sinner is Ignoant, fignifies, that Sin is the Cause of Ignorance, ut it oftner fignifies, that Ignorance is the Cause f Sin.

So far as it is our Interest to Live well, so far tis this is our Interest to understand our Religion. A and the Christian that passes his Life without Studying, nd without Learning his Religion, is only Virrions for nous by chance.

fon h No body determines with more Affurance of Tis be keligion, than a Libertine, who sets up for a Devoti Vit, because no body is more Ignorant of it.

To judge of a Science which one knows not. quently or has ever Studied, is the height of Rashness norance nd Presumption: This is what Libertines do; in, and nd I wonder that Men, who would call him a ool, that should say, Rapbael was no good ns, that ainter, don't likewise think the Libertine a strike and ool, when he says, this or that is no Sin: or the one has the same Knowledge of Religion. he other has of Painting; they have not fo erfuade nuch as the first Principles of them.

ons, and The Reluctancy we find to the Study of Region, is an Argument of the Truth of it. The Il begur nly Reason why we have a Reluctancy to be recove aftructed in it, is that we are afraid to know

faying However, 'tis not so much, because we don't tudy Religion, that we are Ignorant of it, as ecause we don't Study it sincerely; we bring mit Sin, Il our Prejudices along with us to the Study of ignorant; we don't Study it to inform our selves, but o deceive our selves.

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A Libertine applies himself to the Study of it, to confirm him in his Libertinism; a vicious Man and in to justifie his Vices, and both of them will think is Indithey find what they sought. What the Libertine eeds of does not understand in Religion, or what is not eligion agreeable to his Notions, will be an Argument or him against it, and there is no vicious Man one with the Studies the Casuists, to find out such Decisions as may indulge his Inclinations, who obtained them. them.

Before we come to Study, we must be will sire, ling to Learn; and we might say to Christians that I who desire to be Instructed in their Religion our, i what a certain Philosopher said to his Disciples illing Before you come to my School, forget what you have berting learn'd in that of others.

Religion requires Submission, and a teachable ing e Disposition, as much to the learning its Virtues But has it does to the Practice of them, and even is hristia this, it requires nothing but what all the other Remed

Sciences require. No Scholar will ever be a great Proficient in at what any Science without Docility. Instruction is the prresp Passage from Ignorance to Knowledge; suspend multu your Judgment then in what you are Ignoran o but of, if you desire to be Instructed in it.

To desire to be Instructed, and not to resolvement to be Docile, is to desire Instruction, and to really of some folive to be Ignorant: This is the Folly of the is en Libertine, or vicious Christian, he will not quiet with those salse Principles he has imbib d, and yet will ply he tell you, he seeks to be convinced of the Principles. ples of Religion.

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y of it, and in Religion it self, wherewith to overcome is Indocility: He may find it if he pleases, he eeds only ask it of God. 'Tis the first thing eligion teaches us, that God is the Author and rigine of our Lights, and that it is from him one we can receive them.

But when we ask of God, we must be willing obtain what we ask; 'tis the Condition God the find equires of us, when we ask any thing of him: not in this he requires nothing but what all religion our, if he knew that he, who ask'd it, was unclisciples illing to obtain it. This is another Error of the beauties, if they go so fo far as to ask of God to alighten them, they do it with Hearts as fraid of lighten them, they do it with Hearts afraid of

lighten them, they do it with Hearts afraid of eachable ing enlighten'd.

Virtues But bow shall we subdue our Passions, say those even it hristians, who are enslav'd by them, give us he other Remedy for them? Religion will give it you, if ou can Resolve to withdraw for some time from cicient in at which causes your Passions; break off your on is the orrespondence, for sake that dissipated, that suspend multuous Life, do it at least for some time. Ignorand to but as much for your Instruction in Religion, you do when you apply your self to any Imyou do when you apply your felf to any Important Business. A Man, who has a Suit in and to reaw of great Consequence, how much soever of the is engag'd in Pleasure and Debauchery, can not quiet withdraw from those Pleasures, that he may yet will ply himself to his Business with a composed e Principlind.

Nothing is a greater fign, that Christians at not very desirous to be Instructed in Religion than the Difficulty they make to do for the Instruction, what they do every Day with east

for their Ambition, or their Interest.

I must make my felf be belov'd by some D vine; (faid fome time ago a Woman of Quali Laughing,) that he may rell me sincerely wh he thinks of Religion. If the had fpoke in ea nest, one might have told her, that the way took for her Instruction, was the very way the would make her incapable of being Instructed degme the thought to be enlighten'd by inspiring a P. fron that Blinds. And this in truth is the Ch racter of Christians, that are Ignorant of the Religion. They would both keep their Pa ons, when they ask to be Inftructed, and f them in those of whom they desire that Instru A good Man is suspected by them, his Cl racter of Piery, makes him pass with them so Man that cannot speak otherwise than he do they are more touch'd with the Discourse of Libertine, because they find in him those Passi ining they love.

You don't believe a good Man, when fpeaks to you in favour of Religion, because you fay, he cannot fay otherwise; but that Rehat ex fon should likewise keep you from believing ecause

Libertine.

A good Man cannot speak against Religi and a Libertine cannot speak for it. Do but amine why the one cannot speak against Religible on, nor the other speak in its Commendatione tole and you will find it no hard Matter to jud P part

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flians at hich of these two Testimonies you ought to Religion hich of their two I con you accuse a good Man, for the spect the least. Can you accuse a good Man, for the spect a greater Passion to speak for Religin, than a Libertine has to speak against it. nd that Testimony of the two, where you nd the least Passion, ought you not to think the र भे

ke in each on to defend Religion, than the Libertine has oppose it. You should at least suspend your adgment in this Equality of Passion in both; and see, if besides that Natural Passion, every lan has to defend his Opinion; you do not not of the heir Passion in one or other of them. It ill not be long e're you see, that the Libertine, esides that Passion, has a thousand others; you ill find him corrupted in his Manners, and bject to all kind of Vice; and you will find at off, no other Passion in the good Man, than the doc pinion; or rather you will find, that the only season why the Libertine has a Passion for main-If you fay, that a Pious Man has not less Paseason why the Libertine has a Passion for mainining his Libertinism, is because he has a thound other Passions; and that the only Reason by the good Man has a Passion (if I may use hat expression) for defending his Religion, is

lieving ecause he made that choice without Passion.

In fine, tho' all this should not be convincing Religio you, fince you are told, that Passions are an obut obstacle to the Knowledge of Religion, you aft Religion at least to try, if it is with reason you rendation to told so, and resolve, for once in your Life, to jude part with the Objects of your Passions, that whi ou may examine this Matter without Prejudice.

We ask no better, say those of the Court, ord Quality, than to be instructed; teach us what Repentance us, what Faith in Jesus Christ is, tell us this or that he Sin. Such are the Questions the commonly put, when they find a Man in Conversation able to Instruct them. They ow their Ignorance, they seem willing to be Instructed, but they would have it done in as little times as a Conversation lasts. When the Conversation is ended, they equally forget their Ignorance the desire they had to be instructed, and their structions which were given them; or if the remember any thing, 'tis only to make them of stinate, or scrupulous.

'Tis not long, fince a certain Person wou aver, that such a thing was no Sin; I speak, so he, with the more Assurance, because 'tis Matter I have heard sully discuss'd. I ask'd him who had instructed him so well in it, and ham'd me one, equally sam'd for his Learnin and Piety. Such a one, said I, very much su priz'd, taught you this; Yes, said he; I sa him two Days ago, and he explain'd the who Matter to us in half an Hour; Ah! answer'd give me leave to tell you, a Matter of such In portance, cannot be Explain'd in half an Hou

Most Persons of the World, think themselve sufficiently instructed, if in Conversation when the Talk is of News, and Fashions; they have with a roving Mind, ask'd a Question or two of the Subject of Religion, tho' they have not much as understood the Answer given.

A Person that seeks to be instructed in hast seeks to perplex his Ignorance, and a Man the Re formand tead Mo

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promises to one of the World, to teach him Religion in two or three Conversations, (for fometimes there are fuch) is more Prefumptuous. and a greater Fool than he that promifes to teach one Latin, or Philosophy, in two or three Months.

To fee how fome Christians deplore their Ignornace of Religion, and others boaft of their Knowledge of it; one would think, that both of them had spent their whole Life in that Study, and yet they have not bestow'd one Day in their Life in it.

Most Christians, believe themselves Christians, as most Commendatory Abbots, believe themselves Abbots; they have the Title and Benefice, but are not burthen'd with the Duties of it.

What is it that makes an Abbot? If one considers the Motive, by which Men take that Title, 'tis to be provided of a Benefice, and receive the Revenues of it. The greatest part of Parents, who procure that Title to their Children, and their Children for whom they procure it, know no more of it; and as little do Christians know what it is to be a Christian.

What is an Abbot, who being only an Ecclesiaftick by his Habit, refuses to enter into Holy Orders? Or if he has enter'd, renders them useless, or prophanes them? Who receiving the Revenues that belong to the Church, and the Poor, passes his Life in Idleness, Debauchery, and Pleasure? He is one that does not understand his Profession; and what is a Christian Man the that leads a finful Life? He is one that does not understand his Profession. The

The Ignorance of Religion, occasions the Ignorance of the different States of Religion; and 'tis not so much, because an Abbot is a bad Eccle-fiastick, that he is a bad Abbot, as because he is a bad Christian. There is never an Abbot that would not be a good Abbot, if he was a good

Christian.

You have a Benefice, and will not be a Prieft; 'tis you fay, because you don't lead a Life Religious enough for it; we should allow you this excuse, if you had not on another account an Obligation to live piously? Do you think you can in Conscience keep a Benefice, and not live a Holy Life? If you think so, 'tis not of the Duty of an Ecclesiastick, or of an Abbot, you are ignorant, but of those of a Christian.

'Tis thought, that the Character of an Eccle-fiastick, or a Priest, requires a greater Sanctity than that of a Christian; 'tis a mistake, it lays only an Obligation of some particular Duties, and a Christian that is Holy, is as much so as a Priest that is Holy; an ordinary Christian is exempted from the Duties, but not from the Sanctity of the Priesthood; and if it is said, that a Priest, who leads an irregular Life, is more Guilty than others; 'tis because he has more frequent Occasions of repeating his Crimes.

Tis in this Sense, the Fathers of the Church have said, that what seem'd to be a Trisse in other Christians, was often a Vice in Priests; in saying so, they only reslected on the Scandal which an ill Priest gives; and 'tis only with respect to the Sacerdotal Functions, and to the Edistication which a Priest ought to give, that

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What the Fathers have said of Priests, they might have said proportionably of those, who are in high Stations, and who have great Employments. A Prince, a Magistrate, a General of an Army, are oblig'd by their Character, and by their Office, to deny themselves things, which perhaps they might have allow'd themselves in another Station. But this only regards Edification and Example; for no one Christian is less oblig'd to live a Holy Life than another.

What I say of the Ignorance of Religion, with respect to the Character of a Priest, or Ecclesiastick; I say, in proportion, with respect to almost all other Professions; a Monk and a Magistrate, nay a Merchant, is not a bad Merchant, a bad Judge, or a bad Monk, but because they never Studied thoroughly what it is to be a Christian.

He, who is well instructed in his Religion, will not be long informing himself of the Obligations of his Station; and if we should trace back to their Source, all Injustice and Profanations, we should see, that Ignorance of Religion was the Cause of em.

If a Christian would do but as much to become a Christian, as I have been told, one of the greatest Magistrates of the Kingdom was wont to do, to become a good Judge; if he would spend an Hour every Day in reading attentively the Precepts of our Lord, as this Judge did to read the Civil and Common Law, he would prevent his falling into a great many Errors,

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To become Learned, 'tis not enough to Study, we must know how to Study. This Maxim is particularly necessary with respect to the Knowledge of Religion. There are many Christians, who never once think of Studying their Religion; but the Number is still greater of those, who do not Study it as they ought.

In the Study of Religion, we commonly apply our felves only to that which is the least useful in it; or what is the least useful, is what we Study with the greatest Application.

If Men had bestow'd as much time in Studying the Means to keep themselves in the Grace of God, as in Studying the nature of that Grace, there would be fewer conceited Christians, and a greater Number of good ones. Perhaps that Man, who has a Misunderstanding with his Neighbour, because he accuses him of having very unreasonable Thoughts, concerning the Love of God; would be in friendship with him, if he had spent as much time in examining how he might acquire that Love, as he gave to difpute of it.

Those, who are the most ignorant of what is useful for them in Religion, are commonly such as have the greatest Curiosity to be instructed in what is of no use to them, and I believe there are amongst the Quality, and at Court, many more Ladies, who have become Parties in the disputes about Grace, than have thought of asking that Grace of God, or put themselves in a

way to obtain it.

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Christians neglect those Questions they ought to know, and are very inquisitive about those which are referv'd to the examination of the Learned. Every body, to the very Women. have taken upon them in this Age, to dispute about Grace, but I don't believe they have all been employ'd in Studying the Importance of

Let us receive from the Church, and from the Doctors of it, the Knowledge of the Mysteries: let us leave to them the care of Explaining them. and Declaring them to us, and let us confine our felves to the Study of that which is necessa-

ry for our Salvation.

Men have much greater Curiofity for the Myferies of Religion, than for the Moral Obligations of it. Nothing is a greater fign of the little Desire they have to make use of their Knowledge.

If Men Study the Obligations of Morality, is out of the same Curiosity, they have for the Knowledge of Mysteries. The greatest part Study the Christian Morality, that they may be able to talk of it, few Study it to be convinc'd of it.

'Tis without Reason, Men complain of the Obscurity of the Precepts our Saviour has given us: He that reads them with a Resolution to profit by them, will find them clear and deciive. A Christian can scarce be engag'd in any Circumstances of Vice or Irregularity, but he will find the Course he ought to take, determin'd in the Gospel.

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There are many, who have read the Gospel, and commented on it, and yet know as little of Religion as they, who are employ'd to take a fair Copy of an Act know the Contents of in Ask them what the Act they Copied, contain'd, they know nothing of it, they only thought of taking a fair Copy; their whole Application was bent on that. Ask the greatest part of those, who have read the Gospel, or commented on it, what it determines in fuch and fuch Cafes, they don't know, they only read it, or commented upon it, for the fake of Reading or Writing on it.

What is it to know the Gospel, in the Sense ant of those, who pretend to know it? 'Tis to know state the History and Criticisis of it, and to understand a passage in Scripture well, is only to know idential the different Interpretations it will bear: by Vi What is it to know the Gospel, in the Sense This is not to know the Gospel. St. Chrysoftome, iven Writing of the Ignorance in his Time, concerning St. Paul's Epistles, tell us, with astonishment, that there were many, who did not so much as The know the Number of an a We must not think know the Number of 'em." We must not think, and he that that Father confin'd the Knowledge of St. ind ei Paul's Epistles, to that of their Number. One ay, a may not only know the Number of St. Paul's ud, if Epiftles, but the Number of their Chapters too, The and yet be unacquainted with St. Paul's Epiftles. lination But he supposed, that if they did not know the sion, Number of St. Paul's Epiftles, 'twas not to be presum'd they had Read them and Studied them hany we enough, to have any useful or necessary Know-imself ledge of 'em.

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There are many who know the Gospel, as a Man knows a Building, he can count you its Apartments, its Windows and its Pilasters, and

ke a give you a very good Description of it, but is not a whit the better Architect for that.

To know the Gospel, is to know to apply it to our selves in the regulating our Minds and Manners. This is what sew Christians know, those, because sew read or study the Gospel for that on it, end.

they But that which hinders Men from having that ment-knowledge of the Gospel which consists in the riting Application of its Truths to the Disposition of heir Hearts, is not so much their being igno-

heir Hearts, is not so much their being ignoant of the Gospel, as the Ignorance of the
know state of their own Heart.

How very common is it to hear People condently say, for my part that Vice is none of
bear: hy Vices; I have no ill Will to any; I am not
softome, liven to slander; whilst they are as much Slanderers, Envious and as much at Enmity as
there.

There are sew Vices Man can boast he has not;
t think, and he that will study his Heart well, will there
e of St. and either all Vices or the Seed of all Vices,
and, if it be not pluck'd up.

The good Christian is not he that has no Insers too,
Epistles.
The good Christian is not he that has no Inmow the sion, and not to be attained in this Life. He
be presented them hany vicious Inclinations, but does not allow
imself in any one of them. To say that we
ave not certain Vices, is generally if we know
what There

what we mean, to fay we either dare not, or know not how to have 'em.

They that boaft of having no Criminal Engagements, and are not very pious, mean no thing else but that they are either too fearful, or too lazy to run into them; and to have no E. nemies, in the Language of the World, fignific no more, than that we are unwilling to have the Trouble of contending with any one.

The Science of Religion is the only Science that teaches us to be good, but it only teache us to be good, because it begins by convincing

us that we are evil.

Since the Science of Religion is of all Science the most necessary to Man, the first Error of Men in this Matter is, not to be convinc'd of it Necessity; The second is to see that it is neces fary, and yet not to do all we can to acquire the

Knowledge of it.

'Tis in the Precepts of our Saviour, and in the Reflections of our own Heart, that we must be gin to study Religion. And perhaps if a Chri stian knew himself, and meditated daily on the Words of our Saviour, he would not stand it need of any to inflruct him in the Good he ough to do, and the Evil he ought to shun.

Every body has Understanding enough to be purs to

a Christian.

If Christians are ignorant of their Religion, 'tis not for want of Sense, nor want of Master sholly'r 'Tis only for want of a Defire to learn it.

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f the Danger to which Christians expose themselves by being ignorant of, and not practifing Religion.

THE little Care Christians take to learn, and to practife their Religion, would make ne believe, that it is a thing of no Confecience mence to them; there is no Affair they are fo

ncing They who propole to live in the World, or appear at Court, neglect nothing that the ience court or the World require of them; they find for a me for every thing; and how toilfome and of it oublesome soever so many Duties are, yet they need indure all that Toil and Trouble, because they ire the ook uponit as a Matter of Consequence to make emselves fit for the World and to please it.

in the Scarce any one neglects the Care of his Forinft be one and Establishment; that is the Aim of all
Chicar Thoughts and all our Cares, because we
on the ok upon it as a dismal thing to live without
and is londer or without Wealth.

Every one can foresee afar off the Inconveni-

nces and Contempt of old Age; and endeato be ours to shelter himself from both by labouring make his Fortune in Time.

ligion Tis only in the Affair of Salvation we are lasten holly negligent, we foresee nothing, we fear othing.

The World has a great Contempt for those ho never think of to morrow, and who by llowing their Inclinations, have neglected

the Care of their Affairs and Fortunes. When they fall into Poverty, Men are but little touch'd with their Mifery, every body rejects and shuns them, 'tis their own Fault, fay they, they might, if they would, have liv'd enough at their Eafe.

The Contempt we have for those who by their Negligence and Extravagance are miferable in this Life, is a Lesson to all Christians to make Provision for the Life to come; and the same Prudence which teaches us to take Care that we may not be unhappy in this World, does likewife teach us to use all our Diligence, that we be not miserable in the other.

We cannot fear any Mifery in this Life, which is not less to be fear'd than the Misery of another

Life.

If the World has but little Esteem for those who only think of the prefent, as little should

we esteem a bad Christian.

All that the World condemns in other Affair, it excuses in the Business of Religion. A Christian who should behave himself in his other Alfairs as he does in the Affair of his Salvation, ave to would not be sufferable in the World: Men would look on him as a mad Man.

Tis only in the Business of Salvation that the pive no World pardons Men their Imprudence and falle xpose Steps: Nothing is a greater Proof that the World or Ma does not look on the Bufiness of Salvation as a To re

Business.

Men cannot justifie their extreme Negligence ach this to provide against Eternal Miseries, but by say and all ing that they have no Experience of them as datter, they have of the Miseries of this Life; that they have of the Miseries of this Life;

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e and feel thefe every Day, but have only a onfus d Knowledge of the others.

But when they lay they have only a confus'd nowledge of the Miferies of another Life, that do they mean? Do they believe them or do bey not believe them? They dare not fay they o not believe them, fince after all they have Proof of their being falfe. If they believe em, there is no need of their having the Exenence of them, to make them endeavour to rovide against them: 'Tis enough that a Misbrune may happen, to make one think of preenting it.

Every Body has Prudence enough to fear what nother bay happen, and to provide against what they at. The Miseries of Eternity may after all be thok ich as we are told they are, How can we then should at fear them? If we do fear them, how can we

orbear to provide against them?

Affair, If all that is told us of Hell Torments be a Fiion, we are in the right not to think of avoidier Affair, but if it be all true, what reason can we
ration, ave to expose our selves to the Danger of them?

Before we resolve not to provide against so reat a Misery as Hell Torments, we must re-

reat a Misery as Hell Torments, we must renat the olve not to believe them. If the Christians who
defalls apose themselves to such a dreadful Misery are
world or Mad they must be Atheists.

To resolve not to believe a Hell, we must
ave Reasons to assure us that there can be no
igence and thing; but this is what we never can have:
by say and all the Arguments of the Atheist in this
em as statter, can at most but raise some Doubts:
they therefore every Christian that does not think of
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avoiding Hell, may justly be accounted a Madman. If he does not believe a Hell, he ist Madman to chuse not to believe it, when he has no reason to affore him of its being a For gery; if he does believe it, he's a Madma not to think of fecuring himself from it.

A Christian can never justifie himself in hi Negligence of every thing that concerns his Re ligion, fince he can never be fure that his No

gligence shall remain unpunish'd.

As long as we have the leaft reason to believe that a thing may happen, we never can have any reason to neglect it. But how many Rea fons have we to believe the Truth of Eterna Torments? If we had no other than the Teff mony of those, who for so many Ages have been of this Belief; 'tis more than enough to hinde us from running the hazard of them.

No Man of Sense, would expose himself to Danger which two or three fensible Persons al fur'd him was evident. If a Traveller was affur that fuch a Sea, such a Forest, or such a Mour than hi tain were unpassable, he would not venture or

them.

Tis enough to doubt of a Danger, to make Eterna

us look out fer a fafer Way.

The most that a vicious Christian can do, i to doubt. To doubt, is to believe a thing may ly and be, or may not be; as long as we believe thing may happen, we ought to fear it will hap suppor pen, and be careful to prevent it.

But when the Danger we doubt of, is a mol extrav dreadful Danger, when our Fortune, or ou any M Life is concern'd; how doubtful foever we be of then b

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Prejudices against Religion, &c. 85

a Mad yet we speedily resolve not to expose our he is relyes to it.

nen he If the danger of Perishing in any Occasion, a For was made evident to a Man; and he should yet ladman sek that Occasion; we must conclude, that he ther fets no value on his Life, or that he has omething in view more precious to him than life.

A Man, who exposes his Life in Battel, does believe is: He has Honour in view, and Honour on the his occasion is more precious to him than Life. Y Res A Christian then, who exposes himself to the Eternate al Torments of Hell, must likewise have sometimes in view that is more precious to him than his Soul.

hinds Can any thing be more precious to a Man only because it would be a shame for him to

han his Soul?

han his Soul?

Let a Man take a view of all the Pleasures and sons al Glory he can fancy to himself in this World; affur lare he say, that they are of more value to him Mount than his Soul?

Yet he must say so, for there is no Medium; the same of the same to shun the

a Christian must either take care to shun the o make Eternal Torments of Hell, or if he will not, he must look upon them as something more sup-do, i portable and easie, than the Constraint of a Ho-

ng may ly and Christian Life.
lieve: To believe that Eternal Punishment is more ill hap supportable and easie than the Cares and Conftraints which a Christian Life requires, is so a most extravagant an Opinion, as I scarce believe or on any Man can be capable of; how can a Man then be said to act with Reason, who does not think of shunning Hell?

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Occasion of Sin, as to compare the Pleasur which he hopes to find in Sin, with the Tormen he must suffer for it; he would not sin. There is no Passion, no Transport that would not cool'd by that Comparison.

Blood, the number of good Men would be much

greater.

When a Christian does not lead a Christian Life, 'tis not in reality that he is more affect with the pleasure of Sin, than with the Punishment of it; 'tis because he is never in a Condition of comparing the one with the other.

Paring eternal Punishments with the Pleasures this Life, is to be every whit as Extravagant, a sif one esteem'd the first to be of less Important

than the laft.

When a Man is drunk and commits extrangant and brutish Actions in his Drink, we do not say that he is Extravagant or Brutish, we only say that he is Drunk. We do not call him Extravagant or Brutish, unless he delights in Drunkenness.

When we see Christians seek Occasions of Sin we should not say they don't value Eternal Punishment, but only that they are debauch'd; and should not accuse them of not valuing Eterna Punishment, unless we see them in love with their Debauchery.

There is little Difference between a Christian who says he does not value Hell Torments, and him who lives and acts as if he said so, what does

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does it fignifie that one is forgafonable as to own he fears the Punishments of Hell, if he is not reasonable enough to be Careful to secure himfelf from them.

We should abnor a Man that should very unconcernedly fay he counted it nothing to be damn'd; and ought we not to abhor him as much, who does nothing to shun Damnation.

A Christian who should say, I don't fear Hell, nor value it a Straw if I am damn'd, would certainly be mad : But methinks he who fays he fears Hell, and yet does nothing to avoid it, is madder fillion blued sensing

There are no Christians who do not believe. or do not fear Hell; but they almost all forget in this respect, both what they believe and what thouland Pour they fear.

The Folly of Christians therefore in this Matter, confifts only in their Neglect to confider of what Importance it is to lead a Christian Life. for no Man is to Extravagant as not to value his Soul, and whatever Doubts he may have concerning the Truths of his Religion, Doubts could never make him calmly and deliberately refolve to run the Hazard of being eternally Miserable. If he does it in Effect, 'tis without having form'd any Resolution upon it, he does it without thinking what he does. He only thinks of living, and living Pleasantly; The present takes up his Thoughts, and he never looks beyond it.

Christians are in this Respect like one I knew who was much given to Gaming. His Solicitor came to tell him, that if he would not lofe a Law-fuit of Consequence, he must go wait on

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Pzejudices against Religion, &c. 89

Paffion in time. Every body will grant this and all that can be faid in his Excuse is, that when he gave himself up to Gaming, he did not forefee that the Habit of it would prove a hindrance to him in the gaining of his Caufe.

This is indeed what he might plead for an Excuse, but Christians have not so much to say for themselves; They may without Divination foresee that a Criminal Life will ruin them for ever; of this they must have been affur'd as soon as they knew any thing of their Religion.

They have then proportionably the fame Interest to resist their Passions, as this Person had to refift his Inclination for Gaming. Gaming made him forget the Care of his Law-fuit, and Christians ought to suspect every thing that may make them forget the Care of their Salvation. It (to return again to this Person) he would have justified the Neglect of his Cause, by saying that he did not think of it, would he be thought to speak like a reasonable Man?

When an Affair is of Confequence, a Man is not acquitted in the World for his faying that he did not think of it. The World expects He

should think of it.

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That it is not allowable to forget an Affair of Consequence, is a Maxim receiv'd by every body, and a Man would be thought very Extravagant who should say otherwise: What Name then do Christians deserve, who forget the Affair of their Salvation?

The World carries the Nicety of its Prudence at hap in this Matter, to fuch a height, as not to allow a Man that has an Affair in which his Glory,

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his Estate, or his Life is concern'd, to call any o.

ther Affair an Affair of Confequence.

Tis the Christian only, strictly speaking, who who cannot have two Affairs of Confequence. That which concerns his Salvation is of fo great Importance, that it ought to be his only Bu-Tinels. House of ton av

It would be a Shame and a Folly for a Man to forget a weighty Affair for the Amusement of a Trifle; and if that Person we have mentioned, should have faid to those who represented to him the Importance of his Law luit, that Gaming was his Bufinels, he would have pals'd

To hear Christians talk, they seem no less un reasonable. They have their Salvation to gain and they fay their grand Concern is to have Pleasure or Wealth in this World. If they go fo far as to fay they wish for Salvation, one can fee nothing in them to make him believe the

ever think of it.

C. CLESTON SUR & We judge of the Importance of an Affair at cording as we fee one busied about it : We fe Christians bufy about every thing but their Si vation; by what shall we judge then that the Affair is of Importance to them? We shall no be long with a Courtier or a Person of Rank before we perceive they are of Quality or in Fa vour, and know if they have either Law-ful or Enemies, or Ambition. All this is very of vious on the first Conversation with them, by there are many Courtiers and Persons of Rank with whom a Man may pass his Life withou harm in perceiving them to be Christians.

Sometin

Prejudices against Religion, &c. 91

Sometime ago I found among the Servants of a Person of Quality, a young Turk who had been baptized a little before; I ask'd him if he had been infructed in the Christian Religion, in a word, if he was a good Christian? Christian, replied he, yes Sir I am ; I fleep, I drink, I eat, I play at Gards, I go a Hunting, for that is all I fee the Christians do, with whom I live.

Tis no wonder a Christian should not give others ground to think he is a Christian, when

he never thinks of it himfelf.

Since the Error of Christians in this particular, consists in their not thinking of their Salvation, and in being never in that fedate Temper necessary to the comparing of erernal Misery with the Pleasures of this Life; they ought to look upon all those Occupations as dangerous, which hinder them from thinking, and deprive them of that coolness of Temper.

If we ought not to forget an Affair of Confequence, we ought as little to feek or to do that

which may make us forget it.

Why does a Christian never think of his Salvation? 'Tis because he has other Thoughts in his Head that take him up entirely: He thinks of raising himself, of getting Wealth, in a word, of fatisfying a Paffion to which his Vanity or his Rank Pleasure has enslav'd him.

How innocent soever a Passion may seem, it very of our Salvation.

of Rank of the World: There is no harm in Gaming, no withou harm in keeping Company, in feeing Plays and Shows

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s. If you make answer to fuch Persons, that all thefe things are Criminal by their being the Caufe or Occasion of Sin, they will reply they fee no Sin in them? It were better to ask, if all thefe things don't hinder them from thinking of their Salvation ? This Demand will better help to decide the Question. Every thing that is the Cause of neglecting to think of Salvation ought to appear Criminal to a Christian.

A Christian may be so tar blinded as to believe that a Life wholly devoted to the World's not criminal. But I do not think he can be fo blind as to believe that he thinks of his Salvation,

when he never thinks of it. s.od. Ifs no

When a Man is confcious that he does not think of his Salvation, he must be conscious that the Life he leads is not Innocent.

A Christian cannot in Conscience live a Life in which every thing takes him off from the

thoughts of his Salvation, think a

Whether in be Pleasure, Bufiness or Study every thing is criminal that engages a Christian fo much, as to hinder him from thinking of his Salvation as V and no level or works?

A Christian should dread all those Occupation ons which fix or diffipate the Thoughts to much. No Employments, no Amusements at innocent, but such as leave him both the Time and Strength of Mind to think of his Salvation.

. A Philosopher who fludies to invent a new System of Philosophy, and passes all his Life in but the profound Meditations; or a Politician who ap

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plies himself wholly to the Affairs of the Republick, despites the useless Life which an idle Courtier, or a Woman of the World leads : But if the Applications of the one, and the Speculations of the other leave them no time to think of their Salvation, the worldly Woman and the idle Courtier may justly laugh at the Politician and the Philosopher in their turn.

A Christian is never allow'd to have any Employment that requires the whole Man; and how ferious and important foever the Businessor Study may be, that he is employ'd in, he ought to remember that the Study and the Business of his Salvation is both of more Importance and more Serious, Holder and Dands

Men are apt to forget the Affair of Salvation in the midft of the most holy Employments, and tis no Paradox to fay that there are Divines and Preachers, whose Profession of putting other People in mind of their Salvation, has left them no time to think of their own.

I have heard that a Physician who attended one of the most learned and famous Preachers of the Age during his last Sickness, took no Care to put him in mind to think of his Salvation in time, being perfuaded be had thought of nothing

else all his Life. This Preacher, when he was a dying, complain'd that they had given him Notice of it too late.

There are some Christians who deliberately keep off all Thoughts of their Salvation. They do not think of it because they will not think of it. There are others who would think of it, but they have no time. There is little or no difference. difference

difference between them; and one may conclude, that if a Christian finds no time to think of his Salvation, 'tis because he will not think of it.

Men always find time to do what depends on

themselves, if they are willing to do it.

None can be allow'd to fay, they have no Time to think of their Salvation, fince Time was

given us only for that End.

To say, that one has no Time to think of his Salvation, is to say, that he has Business of more Importance than which; nothing can be more Extravagant. To what Business pray is it allowable to give that Time which we rob from the business of Salvation? And for what Business can we find time, when we can find none for that?

To fay, that a Man is too much busied to think of his Salvation, is to fay, that he is either

an Atheift or a Fool.

People think they have a thousand Reasons to believe that those who have the management of the Grand Affairs of a Nation, have no Religion: One thing would prove it beyond Dispute; that is, if we should see them so much taken up with the Affairs of the Nation, as never to think of the Affairs of their Salvation. Whatever other Affairs they had, they would always find time for that of their Salvation, if they had any Religion.

Some have had the Reputation of Wile and Prudent Ministers of State, whom Death has surprized in the midst of the Hurry and Agitations of a Life devoted to the World. They little

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deserv'd their Reputation; for He of all Men is the least Prudent, who dies without having

thought of his Salvation.

They who keep off the Thoughts of Salvation, and deliberately resolve never to think of it, do it only because that Thought seems troublesome to them. How can we be always thinking of our Salvation, say they, that Thought would be enough to turn our Brains.

To say, that the Thought of Salvation is mough to turn ones Brains, is to give a greater proof of the Corruption of ones Heart, than of the Weakness of ones Head. There is no Man, whose Head is not strong enough to think of his salvation, if he had a Heart good enough to lesire to be Saved. 'Tis not the Head, 'tis the Heart to which the Thought of Salvation is roublesome.

The Thoughts of Salvation are of all others he most rational and even the most easie. There is no need of long Speculations, nor abtle Reasoning to think, that one shall not ive always, and that if there are Torments to e sear'd after Death, one ought to be careful to void them.

To think of ones Salvation, is to think that me ought to shun a Danger: There are few fruths the Mind conceives more easily than

his.

A Man, who never thinks of his Salvation, oes a more difficult thing, than he that always hinks of it.

A Man must have a strange Application to very thing that is oppos'd to Salvation, never

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to make any Reflection on it, in the midst of to many things that force us to think of it.

Whatever Resolutions a Man may have taken never to think of his Salvation, there are times when he thinks of it whether he will or no; and 'tis not because he never has any Thoughts of it, but because he always rejects those Thoughts, that we say a Man never thinks of his Salvation.

They who never think of their Salvation, are so much the more guilty, that they have a thousand things before their Eyes, that recal

them continually to that Thought.

God, by denying Men a perfect Happiness in this World, seems to have put them under a Necessity of thinking on another Life. But Men have found out a way of being Miserable in this World, and yet never aiming at a Life more Happy. They all say they are Miserable in this Life, and yet they six here: All their Cares, and all their Thoughts are for this, which they own to be a Miserable Life.

To fay that one feeks for Happiness, and not to look beyond this World, is a Contradiction

How can we believe that Men seek after Happiness, when we see them limit all their Thoughts to the present Life, in which Happiness cannot be found, and which will be follow'd by another Life more Miserable.

The Care of Salvation feems a troublefome thing; but by Neglecting to think of it, some thing still more troublesome will follow.

The Soliciting a Suit at Law, is very trouble fome; yet we don't forbear to solicite, because

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after all, the Trouble of losing a Cause is greater than that of foliciting it. Our dread of the Future, renders the present Trouble supportable.

To have no thoughts of ones Salvation, and ver be calm and fedate, one must have no houghts of the Future. There are few Men fo fond of the Present, as entirely to forget the Future.

As there are few Christians, who do ometimes think of another Life, and how vicious foever they are, have fome Moments, when he thoughts of Death and Eternity come into heir Mind, there are few who believe themelves of the Number of those, who never think ftheir Salvation: They believe that thinking Moment, and that flightly, is to think of it. They are mistaken; a Christian who thinks but arelesty of his Salvation, differs nothing from ne who never thinks of it.

What matters it, that a Man thinks sometimes fhis Salvation, if he lives as if he never thought f it.

We call thinking of ones Salvation in the bristian Dialect, what the World calls thinkng seriously of an Affair; and 'ris requir'd of a hristian, that he should lay to Heart the Care, cannot f his Salvation, as much as a Man that is not a ool, lays to Heart the Care of his Fortune and stablishment.

The World is not yet come to that height of some lindness, as to believe that Man to be Wise, who trouble ortune, than the most part of Christians do for

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because aftet their Salvation, they believe still less that a Man lays an Affair to Heart, when he can never find time to think of it, or never thinks of

it but with a diffipated roving Mind.

But, you'll fay, is not the remembring that one must Die, Praying to God, Joining in the PublickWorship, Hearing the Word of God, On Is not this thinking of ones Salvation. For there are few Christians to whom these things do not happen fometimes.

Would you know if that be to think of Sal vation? Ask your felf, judge by the Effed which it has on you. When one grows no bet ter by thinking of his Salvation, than if he di not think of it at all, He can never be faid

think of his Salvation.

We daily hear Men exclaim, that the World a strange thing; that it is a great folly to be attach'd it, that Nothing is of more Importance than Ones Sa Thus they talk, and yet for a vation, &c. that, continue to love the World, and to neg lect their Salvation.

When any worldly Person dies suddenly, a most all who talk of this sudden Death, make a thousand fine Reflections on the Important Those who are devoted to the World, talk in the fame manner as the Pious de and notwithstanding continue still devoted the World: As Men accustom themselves the most unforeseen Accidents, they grow a custom'd too to the Resections which they not to casion; the One is soon forgot, and they stiffic custom'd too to the Resections which they looner torget the other. The

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There is no other way to think of our Salvation to purpose, but by practifing carefully the Means capable of giving us useful thoughts of it: And whilft we fee a Christian negligent in all the Duties of Religion, we shall always have reason to say, that he never thinks of his Salvation.

The effective Thoughts of Salvation raise a Defire of living a Holy Life: But if we do not embrace the Means of living a Holy Life, we either lose the Thoughts of Salvation, or render them entirely infignificant.

Of the Falle Shame and Humane Respect, which hinder Men from leading a Chri-Stian Life.

TO be asham'd of being a Christian and of leading a Christian Life, one must be perfuaded, that it is either unreasonable to live christianly, or that it is a shame to do that which is reasonable.

There is no Man to Blind as not to lee, after voted tall that has been faid, I don't fay, that nothing selves is more just or reasonable than to live a Christow at standard that it is a Folly and a Madness they of not to do it. To be asham'd then of being a chey standard that he is not a Fool and a Madman.

The Fool and a Madman. There is no Man so Blind as not to see, after

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'Tis true, may one of the World fay, 'tis a folly not to live a Christian Life; but atter all, fo many People are guilty of this Folly, that one is a little asham'd not to be a Fool, when there are fuch Numbers of them. How abfurd foever this Language appears, 'tis nevertheless all that can be faid in justification of that Shame and Human Respect that hinders Christians from declaring for Religion. Thus the Shame which keeps Men from leading a Christian Life, is fo much the more unreasonable, that it cannot be justified but by a manifest absurdity.

'Tis only in the matter of Religion, that one believes his Folly justified by the great Number

of Fools.

There is no body thinkshimfelf oblig'd to takes Lodging in Bethlem, because the Number of those is great, who either are, or deferve to k There.

He who will be Mad, because others are so, by all

is much Madder than the rest.

is much Madder than the rest.

§ r. When the Follies People think they should to dress imitate, neither concern Estate nor Life, we all Chrare content to Laugh at them. We have seen busly as for Instance, Women in emulation of one and our Ag ther add to the height of their Head-dress, and would all the Men even to the Clergy give into the lift Ag Mode of Periwigs, without any other Necessary, or other Reason, than what one Fool think the has to imitate other Fools. We laugh a po Print this Folly, but who can without lamenting and ik'd, n shedding Tears of Blood, behold Christians no ov'd and dare to be so Wise as to save themselves, became supreason the greatest number is so Mad as to damn them station. the greatest number is so Mad as to damn them station, lelves.

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"Tis the height of Impiery and Madness, to rank Wickedness and Damnation in the Number of Fashions we may follow. This is however what all do, who are asham'd of living Christianly; they look upon a Holy and Christian Life as on a Fashion of the last Age, and such as live Piously, do not in their Opinion differ from those who now a-days follow the Old Fashions.

There is but one way of clearing our felves from the imputation of this Madness and Impiely, which is not to be asham'd of being a Chri-

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They who are asham'd of being Christians, Sumber are so much the more to blame, that a Holy and Christian Lite is of all Fashions (if I may nber of most permit them to keep up; this Fashion ne-re to be rei grows Old, and whatever bad Christians may ay, good Men are lik'd by all Ages, and even are fo, by all Men.

A Man would not be allow'd now a-days,

A Man would not be allow'd now a-days, y should to dress after the Fashions of the last Age; but life, we all Christians have a Liberty of living as Religious feen, oully as the first Christians did: As Corrupt as one and our Age is, true Christians, if there were any, refs, and would be as much approved of now as in the into the lift Ages of the Church.

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Sanctity of the Primitive Christians. The Applause which is given to Persons of this Character by all Men, is a Lesson for those who are

asham'd of being Christians.

6. 2. What tho' it be true, that the Corruption of the Age is fo great as might expose true Piety to some Persecution; perhaps 'cis as true on the other hand, that the good Breeding of the Age is fufficient to fecure one from it. As Corrupt as Christians are now a-days, they are still to civil as to fuffer every one to live as he pleafes: and he who is asham'd to live a Christian Like is fo much the more inexcufable, that he might do it if he would without any bodies finding Fault with him for it. The good Breeding of the Age pardons what its Corruption condemns.

You are asham'd to seem Religious only or the Account of those you converse with: But do not those you converse with, daily Pardon you a thousand things; are you the less their Friend, that your Ways are not always to their Humour? They excuse you because you are their Friend, and they would have no more difficulty to bear with your being a good Chil flian, than they have to bear with you fuch a you are.

Whatever Affection you have for those you converse with, you would not suffer them to disparage your Birth or your Conduct; you are Truth fure that if there was any thing in the one of of it. the other they dislik'd, they'd conceal it. should you fear they would not be as complair Sense

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Of all the Inclinations which Christians have, that for Religion is what they are the most sham'd of; because it is the weakest of all their inclinations.

If those you converse with be so free with ou as to blame the Strictness of your Piety, what should hinder you from being so free with hem as to justifie that Exactness? It their Friendhip gives them fo much privilege as to tell you. You are in the wrong to be fo much a Christin; does not the fame Friendship authorize ou to tell them in their Turn, that they are n the wrong to be fo little Christians : Have hey more right to blame your Conduct and

Opinions than you have to blame theirs?

Let Men be never so great Friends, they conradict one another daily on the News and diferent Opinions. The best Friends have diffeent Sentiments on the Philosophy of Descartes and Aristotle; on the Accounts which come vays to fays, I believe this, another fays, I don't believe the you it, without being asham'd of speaking their to more Thoughts; and Men are the more to blame, for not defending the Sentiments of Religion, such a because they are not problematical Opinions, but that Reason and Truth are only on his side who afferts them.

No one seems to be less persuaded of the you are Truth of his Religion, than he who is asham'd of it.

Why

9. 3. You say, you wish you could own your Sense of Religion but you know not how to go about it, while you live among People that despite H 4

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despise and laugh at those who are inclin'd to Pietv.

He who dares not declare for Religion before vicious Men, ought never to frequent their Company. If you are afraid of the Cenfur and Raillery of Libertines, why do you feek their Acquaintance? One who has only good Men for his Friends, is not expos'd to Occasions of being asham'd of his Religion. And in all Sta tions one may find good Men enough to Converse with, without being oblig'd to have to course to the Company and Friendship of the vicious.

Christians will always be asham'd to own their Sense of Religion, as long as they only frequen those, who are asham'd of it, and to delight on ly in the Company of fuch People as have n Religion, is to put ones felf under a Necessia

of being asham'd to have any.

6. 4. You are asham'd to appear truly Christ an before your Friends; your Friends are asham to do the fame before you; they are no more the Cause of your Cowardise, than you are theirs: Do you declare in favour of Religion and perhaps they will declare for it too.

The shame one has to declare for Religion is often grounded only on Imagination. believe Men would laugh at you, if on certain Occasions you should feem affected with Religi ous Sentiments: You are mistaken, they would esteem you the more; do but make the experi ligiou ment or it.

There is no Man so degenerate as to esteet another for his Cowardife, if I thought a Man the E Wh

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who was perfuaded of the Truth of his Religion, did not dare to declare himself for it in my Presence, I should both conclude him to be a Coward, and that he did not believe me an honest Man. If he was not a Coward, he would not dissemble the Sentiments of his Heart, if he believ'd me to be an honest Man, he could not think I would have him dissemble them. To whom does the Man that has the Cowardise to betray his Religion offer the first Affront? to those for whom he has that Cowardise.

§. 5. 'Tis not because there are a great many Atheists that one is asham'd of Religion, 'tis be-

cause there are few honest Men.

A Christian that has all the Qualities of an honest Man, who is Generous, Sincere, Equal, Beneficent, in a word, fuch as the World requires an honest Man to be, such a Christian will not be asham'd of his Religion, and no body will take it ill that he should declare for it.

The World is not displeas'd that a Christian. who is a throughly honest Man, should seem Religious. Such a Magistrate is known to be Unjust, Covetous, a bad Father and a bad Husband, and yet fets up to be mighty zealous for Religion his Religion; the World laughs at his Zeal, and on. You is displeas'd that a Man who has not the first n certain Principles of Honesty, should pretend to be h Religi Zealous for Religion.

ey would If the World will not allow Men to feem Ree experi ligious, 'tis on Christians themselves the Fault

must be laid.

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parts of it, the World would allow them to appear Christians, both in the one and the other.

The Man that would pass for a good Chriflian, minds frequently nothing but the Exterior part of Religion. If he should be ask'd why he is fo much taken up with fuch things? he anfwers, we must not be asham'd of our Religion. Such an Answer will not satisfie one that should find this Man, who is fo zealous for Religion, wedded to his Interest, a Slave to Ambition and the E. steem of the World, he'd tell him it is not by observing the Ceremonies or Externals of Religion that a Man is to show himself a Christian, but by facrificing his Interest, Ambition, Vanity. Oc.

Christians who solicite by all manner of ways for Places above their Birth and Merit, who are faithless Friends and irreconcileable Enemies. may indeed if they please, profess themselves Religious, but they must not expect the World should approve of their Pretending to Religion.

Whatever External Marks Men give of their being devoted to Religion, they can only be edifying when they are join'd with the folid and

essential Marks of true Piety.

A Christian who makes sumptuous Feasts, in which he is lavish of all the Delicacies and Dainties the Season affords, loses thereby his Authority of filencing fuch as offer to speak at his Table against Religion. The fame Person who invites his Friends to his County House to keep a Festival, and after Divine Service entertains them profusely, destroys by his Feast the Marks of Piety he gave by celebrating the Festival. When

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once he exposes his Friends to Intemperance, he is the Cause of all the Effects it may have on them. Delicacies are not privileg'd by the Entertainers Devotion, the Wine for being pioully distributed, loses neither its Relish nor its Strength.

There is none fo blind or fo simple as the deyout Man, who thinks to fignalize his Religion by making Feasts, in which nothing is wanting to

please the Palate and excite the Appetite.

6. 6. The Ridiculousness of Peoples profesfing Religion, when they do not observe the most essential Duties of it, is the Cause of so ma-

ny Persons not daring to profess it.

6. 7. The Obligation that lies upon Christians not to be asham'd of their Religion, puts them under the Obligation of living a Virtuous Life; but they must not think that the failing in this last Obligation gives them a Dispensation from the first: The Obligation not to be asham'd of ones Religion may be faid to preceed that of living Piously. However Corrupt a Christian is. he is oblig'd by being a Christian, not to be aham'd of his Religion.

There is neither Humility nor Prudence in believing ones felf not good enough to speak in

Favour of Religion.

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Faith alone is what gives a Christian Authority of ty to speak for Religion.
Tis ridiculous indeed to speak for Religion and to be vicious: but it is Impiety or a wretched Deceit, not to dare to speak for it, because one is vicious.

Tis

'Tis not a sufficient Reason for a Christian's not speaking for Religion, to say that he does not live piously enough to persuade Men of what Whether he perfuade or not, he is obhe fays. lig'd to speak if he be a Christian.

A virtuous Life is not necessary to qualifie a Man for speaking in Favour of Religion, 'tis only necessary to convince People of what he

lays.

There are fome things we ought to speak of, tho' we know we shall not convince. Such is Religion: But a Christian who has any Sense, will be asham'd to speak of a thing he cannot convince Men of and therefore he'll be asham'dof his vicious Life, if he has any Senfe.

A vicious Christian who speaks in Favour of Religion, ought not to be asham'd of what he fays; he ought only to be asham'd of his being

vicious.

6. 8. These Reflections are enough to show the Error of fuch as think it sometimes allowable to conceal their Sense of Religion. Corruption of Manners be not a Reason for difpensing with a Christian's declaring for Religion, there can be no reason found for his dissembling

§. 9. If then one is persuaded of the Truth of Religion, he cannot be asham'd of professing it, but because he either dares not, or knows not

how to declare for the Truth.

If a Man be honest, he will have Courage enough to own the Truth, and Sense enough to know how to do it.

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A Christian who has Courage enough to own his Thoughts of Religion, will always if he pleases have Sense enough to know how to do

Whoever has Sense enough to speak what he thinks and what he believes, has Sense enough to own his Religion. And is there any Man who has not Sense enough to speak what he thinks ?

If the false reasoning of those who attack Religion puzzle you, or the splendor of their Rank dazzle you; if then you have not Sense enough o answer them, you have at least enough to hold your Tongue. Shew your Religion by your Silence, if you cannot prove it by your Difcourfe.

There may be Christians perhaps who have so little Sense as not to know how to speak in Fayour of Religion; but these are not the Gentry, nor fuch as live at Court. They who converse with People of Fashion, have always Sense ehough to speak what they think, when there is eccasion for it.

If Persons of Quality or at Court, would use their Wit in Defence of Religion, as in other things, there would be no Christians better able ruth of to take the part of Religion than they.

Persons of Rank know how to espouse any Party but that of Religion; They can take the part of their Relations, their Friends or Benefa-Courage dors, &c. and God, if I may fay fo, is the only enough Benefactor whom they think they may be al-low'd to be asham'd of.

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6. 10. There are some things in Religion which a Christian thinks he ought not to be a sham'd of, why should there be any of which he thinks he ought? You think your felf oblig'd to perform your Easter Devotions, or at least to make People believe you do it; why don't you think you ought likewise to banish all impion Discourse, to be constant in Private and Family Prayer, &c. Would you not by these give a great Marks of your Religion, as by your keep ing of Easter?

The fame Christian who at sometimes is a sham'd of his Religion, at other times thinks he ought not to be asham'd of it. You would be asham'd to preach Modesty and Sobriety during the Carnival, but you are not asham'd to pread it in Passion-week and at Easter. What Religion have you at Easter which you had not in the

Carnival?

If Religion can serve for a pretext of Interest or Glory, Men make no difficulty in professing it. The same Judge who, without any regard to Religion, supports the Injustice of a Party of great Name and Power, shall answer to one that is obscure and of no Interest, That he can do me

thing against his Religion.

It you would have me believe you speak in Earnest, when you fay you can do nothing a gainst your Religion, let me see you equally las ofte guided by your Religion in every thing. fwer the great Men who defire you to do an un just Thing, as you would answer the means fort, keep the same Language to a Minister of State and a great Favourite, which you so ofter make

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do to others, I can do nothing against my Religion. You have more occasion to fay so to them than to others.

When you are made a Judge, you take an Oath to act and speak suitably to your Religion. You took the same Oath at Baptism. You would appear to be a Christian on the Bench. why would you not appear so every where else? s there a Glory in doing nothing on the Bench gainst your Religion, and can there be any Glory in doing any thing elfewhere against it? Or are the Ties which oblige a Judge to be just and to show himself such, are they stronger than hose which oblige a Christian to be truly a Christian and profess his Religion?

How asham'd soever Persons of Quality and Courtiers are to appear Religious, that Shame eases when once the Prince becomes a pious Christian. They are asham'd of not being Deout, when the Prince would have them fo. God, who always requires it of them, is not reofession arded. 'Tis not the Laws of God which change regard he Face of the Court, 'tis the Example and Party of Laws of the Prince. he Face of the Court, 'tis the Example and

A Courtier is sometimes Devout and someimes not, because he is a Courtier; a Christian s always Devout because he is a Christian.

A Courtier who appears Zealous for Religion, as often no other end in it, but the Glory and Merit of being a good Courtier.

A Courtier who is asham'd to be Religious for fear of making himself Enemies at Court, is not more Guilty than he who professes it only a fear of make his Fortune by it o make his Fortune by it.

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A Christian who is Devout according to Times and Places, has likewife no Merit but at certain Places and Times, his Reward is at most in this World only.

6. 11. A Prince who is asham'd of his Religion, is so much more Guilty, that what is on. ly Shame in him, becomes a kind of Necessity

in others.

A Prince who is asham'd of his Religion, can have no other Pretence for that Shane but his own Wickedness.

§. 12. A Prince is thought Religious when he countenances the Ministers of Religion, and build Churches and Houses for them. These should be the last Marks of Religion in a Prince: The by banishing all Scandal from his Court, by reforming Abuses, by never undertaking unjust Wars, by refifting Flattery and vain Glory, that a Christian Prince ought to make his Religion known.

A Prince who would be thought Religious by the Virtues which are required in a Monk, even more deceiv'd than a Monastick that would be thought a good Christian by the Virtues po culiar to a Prince.

Such a War was call'd in past Ages a Religi ous War, as had never been undertaken or lup ported but for want of Religion. And many Princes thought to fignalize their Piety by go ing to the Holy Land, who had staid at home they had understood their Religion.

It is very hard to find a War which can strid ly be call'd a Religious War, but harder to find igion. among Christian Princes a Peace which migh not be call'd a Religious Peace.

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The greater Qualities a Christian Prince has for War, the more his Religion requires him to abour for Peace. War is the most proper way o make his Religion renown'd, but it is the most loubeful Mark of it.

A Prince who has none to regard but God. sin the wrong to be asham'd of his Religion: nd every Christian is as much in the wrong when he is asham'd of his Religion, for no Chrihian has any other to regard but God, in all

hat concerns his Religion.

Me must conclude then, that a Christian who double lates not be a Christian, and own his Sense of should religion is always grantly Religion, is always greatly to blame, and that is Diffimulation can no ways be justified. e diffembles his Religion out of Cowardife, he eserves all the Shame there is in being a Cowrd; if he dissembles it out of Policy, he has but bad Opinion either of his Friends with whom e converses, or of the Prince under whom he ives; if he diffembles ir because his Manners re vicious, and that his professing the Truths of Religion would be to condemn himself, instead f palliating his Crime he increases it, by adding o the Guilt of being vicious that of refolving not to condemn his Vices.

or sup We may likewise conclude that the only true by go Religion, is his vicious Life; for no good Man home i an be so much a Coward, or think it necessary an strice o be so much a Politician as to dissemble his Rer to fin hot, or does not think he ought to profess his he might sense of Religion, we may without any rash

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Judgment conclude, that he has but very little

Religion.

A Christian who is sensible of the indispen. fable Obligation he lies under, never to betray or diffemble his Religion, will carefully shun all Occasions where Cowardise, Complaisance, or Policy might draw him into fuch a Diffimulation: He will endeavour to live in fuch a manner as that the Profession of Christianity may not appear in him Ridiculous or Hypocritical: But tho' it should be thought, a Jest or Hypocrifyin him, he will always call that Evil which is Evil, ays of and Good that which is Good; fince there can be treque no Circumstances, no good Manners, nor any Tis m Reason that can ever oblige us to call Evil Good, or Good Evil.

But if no Reasons can ever oblige a Man of be under Sense, to say, that Evil is Good, or Good Evil, and there can be none that should make a Christian me Officither dissemble or not act suitably to his Religion. The same reason which constantly obliges stribute to call that Good which is Good, and that Evil me part which is Evil, does always equally oblige areasys of sonable Man to do the Good and shun the Evil. Oper so Thus in whatever manner we consider it, a More Christian whom Shame and human Respect be even hinders from living as a Christian ought, is untake of a reasonable Man.

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f the Mistakes of Christians in the manner of Practifing their Religion.

THere are as many Christians who mistake the way in which their Religion should apat, as there are who err in not daring to own ey have any. A Christian is never allow'd dissemble his Sense of Religion; but there are ays of shewing ones Religion, which God does can be trequire of all Christians.

Tis much the same with Religion in respect of ankind: There is no Toleration for any Man

ankind: There is no Toleration for any Man

Man of be unjust, but we must not from thence conded Evil, de that all Men are oblig'd to take upon them thristian me Office of Judicature.

Those Functions which are establish'd for the oblige stribution of Justice, are only design'd for me particular Persons, and there are some yeares ye of shewing ones Religion, which are not per for all Christians.

The person of the Prisons and Hospitals and the person of the Prisons and Hospitals and the person of the Prisons and Hospitals and the that would seat her self on the Bench. he that would feat her felf on the Bench, ald be in her Notions of Justice.

> There are some Women who tho' they be olly devoted to the World, and live in Crial Engagements, have yet their fet Days for ling the Prisons, and burying the Dead out he Hospitals. The same Person who makes

from Morning till Night, keeps People to won in another at some Vestments she has promis'de a Religious Community.

'Tis an Abomination for a Christian, what leads a Scandalous Life, to meddle with the Functions of Religion and Piety, unless he do in order to obtain Grace of God, to put an ento the Irregularities and Scandals of his Life.

We see a Woman devoted to the World, passing her whole Life in Idleness, Luxury, Plassing her whole Life in Idleness, Luxury, Plassing and Sin, and you will have her take up her the Care of the Poor, make Ornaments the Altar, and visit the Hospitals and Prison Tell her then, when you engage her to the good Works, that she begin by changing he Life, or that she do not engage in what yo propose to her, but in order to obtain the Grato change it.

Such Marks of Religion as these, are only profitable to the Parish or the Poor. To give Marks of Religion which do no Honour to Religion and are of no advantage to those who give the is not to give Marks of Religion. But that is better than nothing you'll say. I grant it is. But the things might have their entire Value, if Christ ans were rightly instructed, and not oblig'd give Marks of their Religion, but in such amaner as might be profitable to themselves.

If all Christians would make their Religion appear only in such things as God required them, they would then give no Marks of Picture what would be Advantagious to themselve and an Honour to Religion.

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You who are a Layman, find a great Inclinaon for all the Employments of an Apostolical eal, You love to Preach to your Neighbour, nd are much delighted with instructing and reoving him, You think you should have good access, if the Care of such and such Assemblies nd good Works were intrusted to you, You e wholly intent on contriving Means for reedying the Disorders of the Church, or of exuting those you have already imagin'd, there neither Priest nor Bishop, who, if you might believ'd, could not profit by your Advice: ave patience, and restrain a little that Zeal hich devours you, till the Church wants Miniersand Priests, and till your Zeal finds nothing ore in your felf to be corrected.

You are for running to Prisons and Hospis, but examine first whether in your own Faily, or among your Relations and Dependants ere be no Poor to relieve, no Ignorant to in-

na, or no Sinners to be converted.

'Tis daily faid, that there is scarce any Relion remaining among Christians; and yet nerwere more Religious Societies, more Ser-

Butthe 'Tis not because there are sew Marks of Reliif Chrif eligion left among Christians; 'tis because ich a ma ere are few Christians, who give those Marks Religion they ought to give. 'Tis perhaps Religion Paradox to fay, that there are in Christen-requird om a great many Effects of Religion, and very s of Pictule Religion, and that often there is so much hemselv te less of Religion as there are more Marks of it be found.

You are a Father of a Family, you will n be acknowledg'd truly Religious, till your For the mily shall be well govern'd.

You are a Magistrate, 'tis on the Bench, a not at Church your Religion can be known.

You are a Soldier, we shall judge of your ! ligion by the Discipline you make your Troo

We ought to believe that a Prince has Relie on, when he both has himfelf a Respect and W his whole Court with the same; but we came conden he Honours at Church, to be fear'd in Council.

'Tis not by the Visits a Christian Lady may hey he to the Hospitals and Prisons, we ought to jud elves, of her Religion, 'tis by those she receives a possible of the receives a possib returns in the World.

There are commonly no Marks of Religion thin more doubtful than those which are call'd Marks of Religion. Long Prayers, Modesty in the livid in Church, a care of Beautifying and Adorning This Altars, are call'd Marks of Religion; all the There are doubtful, but what denotes Religion winiz'd in the greatest Certainty, is a Constant applicance wo on to ones Duty, a great deal of Simplicity and Tis Modesty, an exact Care of doing nothing can man others that we would not have done to his his These are true Marks of Religion, the oth Credit are only Means of acquiring it.

are only Means of acquiring it.

§. 12. The last Marks of Religion which to give Christian ought to give, are often those by which the begins, and to which he confines himse There is be est

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Pzejudices against Religion, &c. 121

your For three hundred Years past, a Christian has o fooner been advanced to any Authority in ench, a he State, than he has forgot that the first use nown. Religion requir'd him to make of his Authority, your R was to banish the Disorders or Abuses, which ur Troo had crept either into the Administration of Julice, or Management of the Treasury; and he has Rely has only thought of Building or Indowing of the and the Churches. We may see magnificent Churches and inspirant Europe Built by Favourites, who have been we can condemn'd to Death for their Exorbitances. The Foundations made by Great Men, can and in land be Marks of Religion, when they are ac-

companied with other Marks of it, and when ady may hey have first establish'd true Piety in them-et to jud elves, before they think of leaving Marks of it seives a posterity.

Nothing is more absurd, than for a Christian

Nothing is more ablurd, than for a Christian Religion to his Religion to full'd Martine Ages, when he gave none to the Age he is is is is is in a sind in the Third are many who make their Piety be Canodion with a little are many who make their Families they applies are worse than Infidels.

This contains a true indement of a Man's Religion and the state of the make a true indement of a Man's Religion.

nothing can make a true judgment of a Man's Religion; ne to his his Wife, his Servants, his Children and his he oth Creditors, that can best judge of it. To make the first believe that one has Religion, it suffices which to give some Marks of it, but to make the others believe so, he must have it in effect.

himse There are few Christians who have Religion enough I to be esteem'd good Men in their own Family.

A Christian of the World, who is commonly very ignorant of Religion, and very little care. ful to get himself instructed in it, is easily perfuaded that he is Religious, when he hears Peo.

ple fay he is fo.

The first Mark of Gratitude which should be shown by Religious Houses and Churches for Benefactions receiv'd from Persons of the World is to inform them, that the Good they do them, is but the least Mark of Religion they ought to give. We are no less oblig'd to instruct our Be nefactors, when we can do it, than we are to

pray for them.

A Clergy man is not honour'd by the Confidence and Friendship of a Great Man, but when that Friendship contributes to the Instruction of his Patron, and making him a good Man: Not can he be faid to shew his Religion by the Protection he gives the Clergy, who feems to converse with them, and to keep them in his House, only to make them Witnesses of his Contempt of Religion, by the Irregularity of his Man-

Religion has no true Protectors but Good

Men.

6. 12. When the People go in Procession to invoke the Saints, Protectors of their City, for obtaining of Rain, or Fair Weather, 'tis faid they have a great deal of Religion. Ought we taining not then when we fee the same People running is to to Shows and Plays, to fay they have little Religition in on. This last Proposition is no less true than the former. A Christian often shows his Religion Ange more by abstaining from Publick Diversions than to be by running to Processions. Never

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Never to show ones Religion but in a publick Distress, is a fign that one has but little Re-

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Many Christians think they shew their Religion, when they only shew their Interestedness. To implore the Affistance of Heav'n only for the good things of this World, is a fign we feek

and love none but Earthly Goods.

When Christians shall Pray for Victory over Temptations, for Patience and Humility, with as much Earnestness as they beg for Rain and Fair Weather; we shall have reason to believe. that their Prayers for the last are the Effects of Religion.

Publick Prayers ought not to be counted as Marks of Religion, but when the People by their Repentance have qualified themselves to ask other things of God besides their Conver-

fion.

Such a one thinks to fignalize his Religion by appearing the first at Processions, who if he had any Religion, would leave the Processions to run to Confession.

The Bishops, who in Cases of Publick Difiress, appoint Days of Solemn Prayer for imploring the Assistance of Heav'n; do at ity, for the same time, tho' it be not expres'd, require the People to qualifie themselves for obught we taining it. To ordain Solemn Days of Prayer, running is to ordain Repentance to those who would Religi- join in them.

han the Conversion of a Sinner gives Joy to the Religion Angels; but 'tis a strange sight for the Angels ons than to behold an Assembly of Christians some of

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them posses'd of what belongs to others, some engag'd in Uncleanness, others full of a desire of Revenge, and all of them praying for nothing but a happy and fruitful Year, or for Victory over their Enemies.

God fends fometimes publick Calamities to awaken the Religion of the People, and if he will have us Pray to him to remove those Calamities, he would have us first remove those

Sins which are the Cause of them.

We see in publick Miseries a great many Marks of Devotion, and but few Marks of Repentance; many Solemn Prayers, and few Con-The one are of no use without the versions. other.

9. 14. A Christian, who by his Office and Charge, is as it were the Depositary of Religion, often thinks of no other part of it, but the external Worship.

A Clergy-man is thought to have a great deal of Religion, when he has Repair'd or Beautified

his Church.

We find more Bishops, who have Re-built their Churches, than who have Reform'd their

Chapters.

Men think more of having the Divine Service celebrated with Magnificence than with Modefty. And for one Meeting of the Parish to confult on relieving the Necessities of the Poor, and restraining of Immoralities, there are ten for deliberating about the Purchase and the the Design of some new Ornament.

There are some Churches to which Prefent are fent from all Parts, while in the Neigh-

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bouring Churches, there is not fo much as a Priest capable of instructing the People. How many Schools and Seminaries might have been Founded with the rich Gifts which in some Countries are heap'd up before certain Altars? Can Men think Religion is honour'd by shewing you in one Church a hundred Lamps, and a hundred Chalices of Gold and Silver, while in a hundred other Churches you shall scarce find one Lamp or one Chalice of Pewter.

If the People are so ignorant in Religion, as to give all in one Place and nothing in another, the Bishops ought to be so careful as to instruct

them better in their Religion.

But you'll fay, People have Devotion to give to one Church, and have not Devotion to give to another. If they had no other Thoughts than of Honouring God, and of giving Proofs of their Religion, perhaps they would have no more Devotion for one Church than for another, fince the same God is to be found in all Churches.

To regulate ones Gifts according to the Neceffity of Churches, is a better Rule, than to regulate them according to Fancy, which is subject to Delusion; and a sure way not to lose the Merit of them, is to leave the Disposal of 'em to fuch as know the Necessities of the Churches.

Some Christians have expended Thousands in building one Magnificent Church, who if they had understood their Religion, would have employ'd them in building a hundred plain ordinary ones.

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It may be faid that all that is superfluous in the Magnificence of certain Churches, is fo much rob'd from Religion to gratify Vanity. The great Men who built or founded them, have left to Posterity more certain Marks of their Vanity or Riches, than they have done of their Re-

ligion.

I know not how the Custom has crept into Christianity of putting the Arms of the Founders upon the Altars and Ornaments of the Churches founded by them. I cannot tell if it be the effect of Gratitude in the Churches, or of Vanity in the Founders. There is as little Religion in doing it out of Gratitude, as in doing it out of Vanity. We are not allow'd in this Cafe to give out of Gratitude, what cannot be desir'd but out of Vanity.

Can a Christian who gives Ornaments to a Church, on Condition to have his Arms put on them, be so far ignorant of his Religion, as

to think he does a good Action.

To put the Arms of the Founders on the Frontice-piece of the Churches or Hospitals Founded by them, is a Pious Artifice, you'll fay, to engage others to imitate their Example; I believe indeed 'tis an Artifice, but I do not believe it a Pious one. There cannot be a groffer Mistake than to reckon among Christian Actions, those to which Christians are engag'd only out of Vanity.

Tis only with a design of thinking on God, that I come into the Church and approach the Altar; Why do you give me occasion to think of Men, by exposing to my Sight on the Orna-

ments

ments of the Altar, the Arms of those who gave them? I don't believe indeed, that you seek to divide my Adoration, but at least you expose it to Distraction. And if while I ought to Worship God, my Mind be taken up in Decyphering the Arms that are before me, are not you the cause of it?

Is it to show their Religion, and to have a greater share in the Memories and Prayers of the Faithful, that ungodly and sinful Men order their Bodies to be laid within the Inclosure and at the side of the Altar? Or is it not rather to keep even after their Death, that rank their Vanity made them take while they were A-live?

If Christians had always consider'd, that what ever is employ'd in the Ornament of Churches, ought to inspire a Respect and Veneration of the Divine Majesty; that it is with this View only, they are allow'd to adorn and enrich the Altars; how many Ornaments would have been spar'd? The plainer Churches and Altars are, the more capable they will be of inspiring Respect and Veneration.

§. 15. A Reformation of Dress, Modesty and Simplicity, are only then Marks of Religion, when they are not the effects of Vanity and Avarice.

A Woman who has lost her Husband, makes a kind of Vow, never to wear any thing but Mourning, she wears it ten Years as strict as the first Day; Nothing is less a sign of Religion. If this Obstinate Mourning is an Effect of her Sadness, she shows but little Conformity to the Will

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God, ch the think Ornaments Will of God; if she does it out of Modesty, 'tis an Affectation to be Modest only in Mourning; she may be so in any other Colour that would not put the World so much in Mind of the Loss she has made. The most that can be concluded from her Conduct, is that she lov'd her Husband; but she must give us other Marks of Religion before we believe that she loves God.

If they would perfuade us that 'tis out of a Principle of Religion, that fuch a Prelate never wears any thing of Silk, or fuch a Lady of Quality has only plain Furniture, we must see them equally mortified in all other things, otherwise we shall be to apt think, that what is call'd Religion in them, is either Ignorance or an abuse of Religion.

In Matters of Drefs, Religion only recommends Modesty, and condemns Singularity. We can but little judge of a Christian's Religion by his way of Drefsing, we can at most but

judge of his Humour and Fancy.

Religion has regulated the Colour of Habit, for those only who are Consecrated to the Church; it regulates the matter and the richness according to the Quality of Christians, but leaves to Decency and good Sense the care of regulating the rest.

A Retrenchment of Expences in Habit and fumptuous Furniture, is never more certainly a Mark of Religion than when it is done for the

discharging of Debts.

It cannot be doubted, but that Religion obliges to lay afide all those Adornings and Fashions of gular I who i Breafts makes

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ons of Dress, which may be incitements to irregular Desires; and that consequently a Lady who scruples to wear a Dress that leaves her Breasts naked, has more Religion than she that

makes no scruple of it.

yention of Vice, is a Mark of Religion: What he does for a Mark of Virtue, is often but a Mark of his Vanity. There are no Marks of Religion constantly and certainly true, but such as render a Christian more Virtuous and more Holy: Those which make him esteem'd Holy, he more doubtful.

One Mark of Religion which every Christian soblig'd to give and to have, is a Care to corect his Vices and become better, and he may conclude, that Religion requires every thing of him that may contribute to his Perfection

nd Salvation.

of the Delusion of Christians, in thinking to reconcile the Love of the World with a Christian Life.

IF Christians lov'd the World less, they would find it less difficult to lead a Christian Life: When once our Affections cleave to it, the World has scarce any Maxims but what are dietly contrary to those of Religion. 'Tis not he World that is contrary to Religion, 'tis the ove of the World."

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The World has no Maxims which may not be accommodated to Religion, when once we come not to love the World.

A Christian who looks upon the World only as a Passage to another, will not find the Maxim of the World more oppos'd to his Religion than a French Man who only passes through Spain, will find the Spanish Fashions contrary to those of France. As long as this Man does not think of being Naturaliz'd in Spain, it will be easie for him to live after the French way; so a long as a Christian does not think of being Naturaliz'd (if I may speak so) in the World, it will be easie for him to live in a Christian Manner.

To beap up Riches, raise ones self above others, to live in Pleasures, and such-like Maxims, are Law only for those who are Naturaliz'd of the World to use that Expression again, that is, for those who limit their Affection to the World: Let an Christian only make Profession of aiming a another Life, the World will not prescribe it as Law to him to live in Pleasures, raise himself above others, and to beap up Riches.

Men are not at all offended, that a Monafial lives in Poverty and Mortification, because the look upon him as one that makes Profession not to love the World. On the contrary, the would much condemn him, if notwithstanding the Profession he made of not loving the World, he should live in Plenty, Vanity as Pleasure.

There is no difference between a Monasti and another Christian, but in respect of the love cann to fet

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use of the World; One of them uses the World in a different manner from the other, but both have an equal Obligation not to set their Affections on it: A Christian is no more allow'd to love the World than a Monastick is. A Monastick cannot possess those things which he ought not to fet his Affections on, the other ought not to fet his Affections on those things which he may possess.

It is very strange that Christians of the World. who are so careful to put Monasticks in mind of the Sanctity of their Profession, should so often forget the Sanctity of the Christian Profession, and that they should never think of saying to hemselves, what they know so well to say to

hem, Remember what you are.

We should be Scandaliz'd to see a Monastick to a Comedy or a Ball; ought we not to be s much Scandaliz'd in feeing a Christian go

here?

If we carefully examine the Reason which nakes it unfit for a Monastick to have any share n the Pleasures of the World, we shall find that he same Reason makes it unfit for a Christian. Is not because a Monastick wears a different dress from the rest, or because he has renounc'd Il Propriety, that he ought not to lead a fost ary, the life is contrary to the Sanctity of his Profession. The Opposition therefore of Pleasures to Sancti-, is the reason of that Law which forbids a lonastick the Use of them. The Pleafures of e World are as inconfistent with the Sanctiof Christians as with that of Monasticks.

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Monasti t of the Whatever is contrary to Sanctity is forbidden to every one who ought to be holy. A Christian therefore who thinks he may love the Pleafures of the World, must either believe that he is not oblig'd to be holy, or that he can be holy in

the midst of the Pleasures of the World.

They who fay that a Christian who lives in the World is not oblig'd to live so holy a Life as a Monastick is, can find neither Reason nor Law to authorize what they fay. Whether one lives in the World or not, he is equally oblig'd by being a Christian to lead a holy Life. The Life of those who are retir'd from the World ought to be different from that of other Christians, but not their Sanctity. Or if there be any Difference between the Sanctity of the one and that of the other, 'tis only in respect of some pe-The most Holy is not he whole culiar Duties. Profession is to be most retir'd, 'tis he who best discharges the Duty of his Profession.

They who say that Decency allows the Christians of the World those Pleasures which it for he enter bids the Religious, ought first of all to prove that there can be no Ill in those Pleasures; Decency extends only to things indifferent, and it would be a gross Mistake to think, one may be allow'd to do Evil because there is no Indecency

The

in it.

In whatever Condition one is, there are De but dec cencies to be observ'd; the great Art of a Christot be stian who desires to be sav'd, is to put himsel will be into such a way of Living, that Decencies may Religio not be Irregularities. You think Decency to of belie quires you to be remiss on certain Occasions becaul

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because you live amongst irregular Persons: Affociate your felf with good Men, and you will be freed from those Decencies.

Happy State! where every thing, even Decency engages to Sanctity: Such are the States of the Clerey and Monasticks. But they are not the only States that have this Advantage. We may in any Protession make a Decency of our Duty: We need but declare for Religion, and we may observe it without being wanting to Decency.

They do not fay at Court that N. does not understand good Breeding because he never goes to Plays. He has declar'd his Mind on that Subject, and Decency does not require him to go to them; on the contrary, he would be thought to be wanting to Decency if he should be present at them, after having declar'd that

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A Monastick acts against Decency if he appears at publick Diversions, because he promis'd when he enter'd into that State never more to frequent them. Declare your self a Christian when you come to Court, and the World will never impose any thing for Decencies on you that is be all contrary to your Religion.

The World has it Decencies, so may Religion be said to have Decencies possible to it.

on be faid to have Decencies peculiar to it. are De but declare your felf for Religion, and you will a Chris not be tied to the Decencies of the World. You himsel will be allow'd to observe the Decencies of your cies may Religion when you have once made Profession ency to of believing and following it.

The

The World cannot fuffer one whose Heart is fet upon the World, to pretend to keep the Decencies of Religion; and Religion can less suffer a Man who professes to be a Christian to think of following the Decencies of the World.

All the Art confifts then, as we have faid, in chusing which side you will take. Is it the World you will follow? Don't then pretend to have any Religion. Is it Religion you would be guided by? Think then no more of fetting your Affections on the World. There can be no Union between Light and Darkness, nor can one serve two such opposite Masters.

The most common Mistake in this respect is not a Preference of the World to Religion, 'tis

the hopes of reconciling them together.

A Christian who thinks he can reconcile a Love of the World with his Religion, either does not understand his Religion, or would

feem not to know the World.

If it be ask'd how one shall do not to love the World? It should be answer'd, One ought for that end to study and practife Religion. The World and Religion necessarily destroy one another. Delighting in Religion destroys our Affection to the World, as our Affection to the low a-World destroys the Love of Religion.

If a Christian would but ask himself, in all Reason, the various Circumstances he finds himself in, erv'd a What is it my Religion requires of me? He would A W almost always see that his Religion requires the f good

contrary to what the World requires.

To be often asking ones felf, What is it my he Print Religion requires of me? is not only an easie \$. 16. way ithout

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way of knowing the Opposition which is between the World and Religion; but is likewise the Means to make one prefer Religion to the World. or at least to resolve on begging the Grace to do it.

If a Christian who has a little Religion, would frequently view all the Folly and Triffingness of the World, and at the same time consider all the Solidity of Religion, he would not waver long in his Choice.

What we call the World, is made up of so maby useless and foolish things, that a Man of sense cannot have an Affection for it, but by lifguifing them to himfelf.

I am fure if one should give a Man of Sense hat did not know the World, a Relation of he Life which, for instance, a Woman of the World leads, he could scarce forbear taxing such Woman of Folly, who fpends her Life in Waing only that she may Sleep, in Clothing her elf only that she may be Dress'd, and in having The to other Business than to amuse with Trisses and the anothernal Idleness.

our Af. Such trifling Women and Vainer Men pass to the low a-days for Persons of Merit, who in the me when Men yet acted by good Sense and in all leason, would have been thought to have de-

self in, rv'd a Place in Bethlem.

A Worldly Life cannot bear even the Light res the good Sense and Reason; How much more atravagant will it appear, when examin'd by is it my ie Principles of Religion!

an easie §. 16. It is hard you'll say, to live in the World way ithout setting ones Affections on it. I grant it K 3

it is, and 'tis that Difficulty which makes the Pleasure and Advantage of those that live retird from the World.

But all Men cannot possibly live out of the World, it must therefore be possible to live in the World without fetting ones Affections on it God who requires us not to fet our Affections on the World, and yet does not require us to retire out of the World, does not require a thing impossible.

If you cannot withdraw your Affections from the World without quitting the World, it mu then be in your Power to retire from it; if you cannot leave it, you certainly have it in you Power to live in the World without fetting you

Affections on it.

To think that one ought to retire from the World when one cannot do it, is an Illusion and 'tis an Illusion likewise to say, One canno

leave the World when one ough to do it. * We can always d we suppose sbe Affitance of what we ought, and are never of lig'd to do what we cannot.

You fay, you cannot help fetting your Aff Gions on the World, because you cannot reti from it; you would speak more justly perhap if you faid, that you cannot retire from the World, because your Affections are set on it.

You doubt whether you ought to quit World; but you are affur'd that you ought a to fet your Affections on it. When you ha labour'd in good earnest to withdraw your At o suffer aions from the World, you will be able to jud why do truly, whether you can quit it.

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One may live in the World without fetting their Affections on the World. Examine before you retire from the World if it be possible for you to do fo; perhaps you will find that it is not only possible for you, but that it is even much

less difficult than you imagine.

6. 17. There must be a fure way then of living in the World without ones fetting their Affections on it; and that is, to act according to the Principles of your Religion. The World in that case has no Decencies which Religion cannot ectifie; Religion has none but what the World can bear with. 'Tis not the Engagements which your Profession gives you that makes you Vicious, 'tis those only which your own Coruption leads you to. There is no Employment n the World, a good Man may not take upon him, no Profession in which a Man may not be

good Man.

But, you'll fay, How can a Man be at Court vithout Ambition, or of the long Robe without comnitting Injustice, or in the Army without running into never of Libertinism or Debauchery? It is hard I confess, out after all, 'tis neither the Court nor the Army for the Bench that make the difficulty: On the ontrary, you are made to Swear in Court that perhap on shall do no Injustice; Military Discipline from the ends particularly to the banishing Debauchety ends particularly to the banishing Debauchery on it. and Libertinism; and the Prince whose Favour ou hope for at Court, thinks fit that every one would regulate his Hopes according to his Merit our Afrought. Since then those several Professions of suffer or rather require you to be Virtuous, why do you lay the blame of your Vices on hem? K 4

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The Examples you see there, you'll say, engage you into Vice. But after all, Example is not a Law, or if it be a kind of Law, you find in your Re. ligion more Strong and Sacred Laws than that The more Influence the Law of Example has on you, the more you ought to be careful in Sta. dying the Laws of your Religion.

Why should the Example of vicious Men be a Law to you? 'Tis not the Vicious that obliga you to follow their Example, 'tis you that make a Law to your felf of imitating them. All the Evil comes from your felt, why do you lay the

blame upon others?

If a Citizens Wife that will imitate the Air and Expences of a Lady of Quality, should say that that Lady engag'd her to those Airs and Expences; or if a private Gentleman that will take upon him the State of a Prince, should pretend that the Example of Princes oblig'd his to it, would not they both make themselves it diculous?

The Case is almost the same in all other things, and the most part of those, whose Es ample draws you into Vice, think it ver ridiculous that you will needs follow the

Example.

Since the Example of Vice is not a Law! you, but as far as you are, or as you will vicious, the more you are expos'd to have fu Examples before your Eyes, the more you oug to Study in your Religion, the Means to lead Virtuous Lite.

Is it at Court, is it among the Gentry, the fuch Examples are to be found? 'Tis therefor amon

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among the Gentry and at Court, that one ought particularly to apply themselves to the

Study and Practice of Religion.

It will be difficult to find a Reason why there should be Lessons given on the Duties of Religion to Persons destin'd for the Church, and not to Persons destin'd to live in the World: Why the Monasticks should be oblig'd to Meditation and Prayer; and that Courtiers, or those who live amidst the Hurry and Vanities of the World, hould not; in a word, why there should be Seminaries for Priests and none for Magifirates? Who ought to Understand Religion better than a Judge, whose daily Business is to pass Sentence on the Estate and the Life of his Neighbour? Who has more need of Instruction than a Courtier, or wants more the Affiffance of Prayer, than one who is fo much the more expos'd to the Occasions of Sin, as he is engag'd in the Hurry and Grandeur of the World.

A Priest who is ignorant of his Religion, and all other is not a good Man, will be exposed to many Irregularities; but I doubt whether he will be more expos'd to them, than a Magistrate or a w the Courtier; or that the Evil which a vicious Priest does, is more pernicious, than the Evil which may be done by him, who with a coru will be rupt Heart, has the Liberty of approaching his have fue Prince, or the Power of judging the People.

What a horrid thing is it among Christians, to lead to fee a Man who leads a vicious Life approach the Holy Altar! But what a horrid thing is it therefore ness and Debauchery, go to the Bench to try a amon Man for his Life!

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The vicious Life of a Priest is the Cause of Is it more Scandal, but the vicious Life of a Magino live strate is the Cause perhaps of more Evil; all the do Me World cries out, and with Reason, against a vicional like manner on ous Priest; when will they in like manner cry by wh out against a vicious Magistrate?

What Custom and the Laws have established for Persons destin'd to the Church, Reason and good Sense ought to have establish'd for those who are destind to live in the World; viz Seminaries for their Instruction in Religion.

'Tis granted, that there is need of Seminarie for Priests, tho' the Life they are to lead afterwards will put them continually in Mind of their Duty. How then can it be thought that Perfons of the World have no need of them. they who are to lead a Life where every thing turns them out of the road of Virtue.

What Reason has a Monastick to apply himfelf to Prayer and to the Study of Religion, that a Courtier has not? If you fay that his Profession requires that he thould both know and discharge the Duties of his Religion; will you fay that the Station of a Courtier requires that he should neglect and be ignorant of them? If you say that the one has need of Grace in a State which alienates from the World; will you fay that the other has no need of it, in a State which engages to the World?

It would feem, by the manner of Mens reafoning and acting in this Respect, that none but Persons who live retir'd from the World were

oblig d to a Holy Life.

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Vol. 1. Prejudices against Religion, &c. 141

Cause of Is it is believ'd that all Christians are oblig'd a Magito live a Holy Life, by what strange Caprice all the do Men require less Knowledge and less Pratt a vicidice of Religion in one than in another? And ner cry by what yet stranger Caprice do they require less Caution in those who have need of

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tablish'd the most?

on and The Laws which are observ'd by those of the Peligious Orders are often necessarily the the ry for Seculars, who are the most exposed to the World. A Monastick who never sees Women and passes his Life in Solitude, is oblig'd to Fasting and Mortification; but a Christian who is dailyamong Women and the Vanities of the World. smore oblig'd to them than he. One is often only oblig'd to them that he may keep the Rules of his Order; the other is almost always oblig'd to them for the preservation of his Innocence.

Men are aftonish'd, and with Reason, that One who has renounc'd the World should not be Mortified; but there is still more Reason to be aftonish'd, that a Man who is engag'd in the World, should not be so. Men will have a Christian, who lives upon Roots, and sees nothing but the Walls of his Cell and his Church, oblig'd to Mortifie his Sight and his Tafte; Methinks it should be much more necessary for those Christians to do so, who live plentifully and have the Liberty to fee every thing. Is it ne but d were only to have the Pleasure of casting down the Eyes, or of not Eating, that they Mortifie their Sight and their Taste in the Cloisters? No, 'tis to fecure themselves from those sinful Pleasures

that might be occasion'd by the Senses. fame Reason should more oblige other Christi. ans to Mortifie their Sight and Tafte; The fin. ful Pleasures which arise by indulging the Senses, are more to be fear'd in the World than among those that live in Cloisters.

You'll reply perhaps, that the Monastick are oblig'd to a more perfect Knowledge and Practice of Religion, because they are more ob. lig'd to a holy Life than the Persons of the World. But wherein confifts that greater Sandity they ought to have I befeech you? 'Tis not in the Essentials of Sanctity and Religion; for once more all Christians are equally oblig'd not to love the World: That greater Sanctity which the Monasticks ought to have, consists only in the Observation of some Counsels.

Love not the World, is not a Counsel, 'tis a Precept; on the Observation of which, the Obsours ar fervation of the most Essential Precepts of Rengages
ligion depends. 'Tis not that they may lie on The r the Ground, have no Propriety, and live in a catest Cloister, that the Monasticks are oblig'd to More Workisteation; 'tis that the Love and the Spirit of emselve the World may be extinguish'd in them. Those It is we who live in the World ought likewise to labour of to love the Love and the live in the World ought likewise to labour of to love the Love and the love the Love and the love the love the Love and the love the to extinguish in themselves the Love and the ir Lord Spirit of the World; the Obligation to Mor- is World tification is therefore equal to both.

Persons of the World are frequently oblig'd ho eage to do those things in order to observe the Essentiching tials of Religion, which they pretend the More even nasticks only do to observe its Counsels: Nay, ents, very often the Observation of certain Counsels

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necessary to those who would observe the Efntial Precepts.

This Precept, Love not the World, obliges us cut off all things which will certainly beget

us the Love of the World.

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You find by Experience, that by giving your If up to Company, to Visits and the Pleatures the World, you become the fonder of the forld; 'tis not a Counfel for you but a Precept withdraw from those Visits, that Company and of the nose Pleasures.

The more Riches you posses, the more you Tis not and the Love of the World increase in you! 'tis i; for ot then a Counsel, 'tis a Precept for you to fet g'd not ounds to your Wealth, and be contented with

which moderate Fortune.

only in None are allow'd to increase their Fortune, live in Plenty, and to fill the great Empley-

live in Plenty, and to fill the great Empleyitis a ents in the World, but those in whom Hoine Obours and Riches do not create a Love of and
of Rengagement to the World.

lie on The most part of those who labour with the
e in a eatest Care to raise and enrich themselves in
to More World, are such as most need to confine
pirit of
emselves to a moderate Condition.

Those
It is very hard to be happy in the World and
of labour of the World, and 'tis for this reason
and the
in Lord has pronounc'd a Wo to the Happy of
of Moris World.

But some will say there are devout Persons

But some will say there are devout Persons but tome will lay there are devout Perions ho eagerly catch at all Occasions of raising and miching themselves. That is true; nay some the Mote even so far mistaken as to esteem Prefer-Nay, ents, and Riches, Rewards from God,

and

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and to measure a Christian's Sanctity by his Per Prosperity. This is a great Ignorance of our continuation, which forewarns us that the Righteder to our and the Elect shall be unhappy and persecutive idering ted in this World.

Men cannot carry the Ignorance and Abuse he Wood of Religion to a greater height, than to believe that God gives for a Reward of Virtue, such imes of things as raise in us the Love of the World, and not Po

all those Vices which flow from it.

A Christian who understands his Religion and would live answerably to it, will not to It is ceive Honours and Riches but with trembling on sho The richer he is and the greater Preferments he ation that, the more will he double his Diligence and Vorld Care to strive against and extinguish the Lord of our of the World in him.

How few Christians augment that Diligeno and Praand Care when they are advanc'd to some great Father Preserment? 'Tis their Equipage, their House The their Table and their Magnissience, they only ove of

think of augmenting.

Can it be said that a Christian has received a sold flowith trembling that Honour which raises him a fly the bove others, when he begins to make every bow Friedly tremble under him, when he forgets him Flatter Friends and forgets himself? Where is the Marthat does not behave himself thus upon his Prote Workship. ferment?

Before you were advanced to that Dignity you ill it as now possess, you were assiduous in Prayer and ress and good Works, you were easy of Access, Gent ase and and Charitable. You are more obliged to have and in a sell these Virtues now you are presented. all these Virtues now you are prefer'd.

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Persons advanc'd to Dignities do sometimes continue the pious Exercises they practised in orer to subdue the Love of the World: But condering the way they take to perform them, will be much if they do not fortifie the Love of Abuse he World in themselves instead of extinguishing believe. They visit the Hospitals and keep their set, such imes of Retirement, but 'tis with so much Noise ld, and and Pomp, that their Vanity will find its Acount no less in those than in their other Actins.

not to It is necessary whilst you are in Dignity that embling on should sometimes retire to think of your Salnents he ation; but what need is there of letting the ence and forld know when you do it? Follow the Counne Lor lof our Saviour, Shut your Door upon you, nd chuse such hours and places of Retirement Diligent and Prayer, as are only known to your Heaven-Father.

r House The Obligation you have to strive against the hey only ove of the World, requires that the more the forld feeks and applauds you, the more you receiv hould fly from it. But what will it avail you es hims offy the Multitude, when in the choice of the every bo we Friends you have made, you meet with all rights him Flatteries and Adoration of the Multitude? the Ma The Obligation to strive against the Love of his Prote World, requires you to deny your self all

ofe things that may delight the Senfes; but what gnity you ill it avail you to retrench the Pomp of your rayer and ress and Furniture, when you keep still the s, Gent ase and Conveniency of them? If you should to have and in a Monastick's Cell good easy Chairs, a ed with Quilts of fine Wool, and in a word,

every thing elfe that ferves to indulge the Body, would you think he were mortified, because such good and convenient Furniture were only cover. ed with Stuff? There are some Christians whose Vow of Mortification and Poverty only ferve to make them lead a more eafy and fenfual Life

'Tis not an outward Profession that will extinguish the Love of the World, 'tis an indefatigable Application in attacking and striving a They whose Condition require them to live in the World, have fo much the more need of this Application, as they are more exposi to the Occasions which excite in them the Lore They who make a Profession of of the World. living retir'd from the World, have often like wife fo much the more need of this Application as their Proteffion of Retirement from the World makes them less upon their Guard against the Love of the World.

Once again, to pretend that the Monastick have more need of this Application than those who live in the World, is to pretend that Per fons who live in the World have less Obligation to be fav'd than Monasticks have.

Some will fay the Monasticks have received a greater Measure of Grace, and consequently ur Parare oblig'd to a greater Sanctity. 'Tis grante World; there are Christians who have received more oncile Grace than others, and that God requires more food, of those to whom he has given more; but the lied wi Grace of Faith and Vocation to Christianity there we which is given to all Christians, is great enough ancity to oblige all those who have received it to lead oppose a holy Life, and to set themselves to fight again of the Vereign of the Ver

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very thing that is an Obstacle to it, and as the reatest Obstacle to a holy Life is the Love of he World, every one by his being a Christian as an equal Obligation not to love the World. 6. 18. The Love of the World is the loving thatever in the World is contrary to the Mawill ex- ims of Religion and the Care of Salvation.

iving a fine World when he only opposes the World iving a fine them there needs but a little Caprice or Vanity to make one oppose the World, but there must be more make one oppose the World, but there must be

che Low ove of the World,
effion of A Christian who makes it his chief Design not
en like o sollow the Customs or Fashions of the World,
lication one that opposes the World. But a Christian
e World the lives as People live in the World, who
linst the ollows its Fashions and Customs, and who for Ithat allows himself in nothing contrary to onastick is Religion and his Duty, is one that opposes an those he Love of the World.
That Per We are not allow'd to oppose the World but oligation then we cannot otherwise oppose the Love of

he World.

receive JESUS CHRIST who is our Lawgiver and equently are Pattern came to oppose the Love of the granted world; He tells us that it is not possible to reged more oncile the Love of the World with the Love res more food, and yet he lived in the World and combut the lied with the Laws and Customs of the World: is is in the was nothing Singular in his Life but his tenough anchity. It is not therefore always necessary to least oppose the World in order to oppose the Love the again of the World.

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Before you refuse what the World requires of you, you should be persuaded, that what it re quires of you is Evil. If JESUS CHRIST would have been directed by the Pharifees, he had never appear'd with Publicans and Sinners and his Life would have been made up of no thing but Heroical Singularities. JESUS CHRIST did what the World required of him, when it only requir'd things Indifferent he retained every thing that was Innocent in the World, and avoided every thing that was Er in it.

A Christian who is oblig'd to live in the World, is as much mistaken if he thinks even thing the World requires of him is Evil, as he believ'd every thing it requir'd of him wa Innocent; and he deviates as much from the Perfection of his State by refusing to do an thing for the World, as by refolving to do ever thing for it.

There are some things the World requires us, which we are not allow'd to refuse it whe we live in the World; fuch are all things the relate to Union and Friendship: A Christia

is not allow'd to live only for himfelf.

A Christian in vain pretends to be a good Man if he feeks or affects Singularity, he is no fo good a Man in that Cafe as he ought to be.

Christian Persection for those who live in the World, does not confift in doing extraordinar Things, it confifts in doing only common Thing but in doing them Religiously.

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A Man who confines himself to the Performance of his own Duty, is always a better Man than he who besides will take upon him the Du-

ties which belong to another.

A Holiness which appears at first fight by ones way of dreffing or speaking, is less solid and real han that which discovers it self by Degrees in ones way of acting; and a Christian's Virtues are often fo much the more Heroical, as they

appear to be the more Common.

A Christian then who lives in the World ought to apply himself to study what there is of Innocent in the World, and what there is of Eil. To fucceed in this Study, Humility and a Distrust of ones felf are necessary; One must not feek to draw the Eyes of the World on himelf, in a word, one must only think of being

Holy, and never feek to appear fuch.

A Christian who desires to be truly Holy, will find nothing Evil in the World but Sin and he Occasion of Sin. A Christian who would ppear Holy, will find every thing in the World Evil, by which he cannot gain a Reputation of Holiness. One will seek the Means to do pioully what the World requires of him; the oher refusing every thing that the World reuires of him, will, in the midst of the World, retend to the same kind of Sanctity with those who have quit the World. One will discharge is Employment, and only blame himself for all he Evil he shall commit in the Exercise of it; he other will quit his Employment, and lay all he Blame on it, of the Evil he does in it. One will be an humble and couragious Christian,

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the other will be Pufillanimous and Proud. One faying only that it is hard to conform to the World and keep ones Innocence, will work out his Salvation with Fear and Trembling; the other rashly determining it to be impossible, will only reckon that to be Holy in himself which may diffinguish him from the rest of the World. One has no other Support of his Sanctity than his Diligence in Prayer, and the doing of good Work in Silence and without Show. And the other perhaps neglecting Prayer will think to support his Sanctity by every thing that makes the great est Show in Religion. The Sanctity of the one will be truly known only to God, the Sanctity of the other will perhaps be so much the less approv'd of God, as it is the more known to Men.

§. 19. Tho' the Love of the World properly fpeaking, consists only in the Love of Sin; ye we call Love of the World, the Love of Pleafure of Luxury and of delicious Fare, because it i rare that all these do not prove the Occasions of

Most Christians do not think themselves ob lig'd to refift Sin till they fall or are ready to fal into it; and before they make any Scruple of fenfual and loofe way of Living, they wait till i becomes Criminal.

That which will be an Evil to morrow canno be a Good to day, and a Christian ought ever day to look upon that as Sinful, which will on and if

day make him guilty.

To judge whether the Pleasures of the Worl be finful, you must not consider the Time whe the

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hey feem'd innocent to you? you must consid. One ler them as in the Time when you cannot doubt to the

out they have made you Guilty.

A Christian who lives in Luxury, high Fare, e other nd Pleasures, knows not when he fins, if he is gnorant of the Danger there is in living in that ich may nanner; he is scarce guilty of any Sin which is ot caus'd by his delighting in that fort of Life; his Diis in vain for him to fay that fuch an Affection Works innocent, his Conscience convinces him of the other he contrary.

fuppor There is but one way to be ignorant of the of the solution of the specific on the State of ones Conod, the cience or on the Maxims of Religion. And
his is what Christians who love the world do; e more he World takes them up so much as to leave hem no Time to consider that they are Chriproperly tians.

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The Deviations of Christians, Occasion'd by the Weakness and Inconstancy of their y to fal good Resolutions.

canno A Christian can hardly forbear at some times to make a Resolution of living better, will on and if he would only read attentively the Reections we have have hitherto made, he must Worl

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needs feel a fecret defire in his Heart of changing his Life.

Since he cannot reasonably doubt of the Truth of his Religion, he cannot reasonably take any other Resolution than to conform his Life to his

Faith.

Since that which hinders him form conform ing his Life to his Faith, is either the Difficulties he imagines in observing the Duties of his Religion, or his Prejudices against a Holy Life or the false Ideas he has of what his Religion re quires of him, or his Ignorance of Religion, of the little Care he has to think of it, or the Shame of declaring for it, or lastly his too great Affe ction to the World. If we have been able to make him sensible of all those Errors, we must at the same time have excited in him a Resoluti on either of shunning or forsaking them.

All the Resolutions which Christians make of living better, are Loofe and Indefinite; they are only made in the Understanding but never reach

the Heart.

They take up a Resolution of living well, be cause the Understanding is convinc'd; it would be better if it was, because the Heart was converted.

They feel an Inclination to a Holy Life, bu they do not feel an Inclination to the Mean

necessary for attaining it.

They fay, I would fain be Chaste, but they do not fay, I will mortifie my felf. They have in He w deed a Contempt for the Folly and Imperting be a nence of the World, but they have no Love for nov'd the Soul and Foundation of Virtue, I meathem, Retire

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Prejudices against Religion, &c. 153

etirement, Mortification and Prayer: They rould gladly obtain the Grace of God, but they el an Unwillingness to ask it: And when they y, I wish I was a good Christian, they mean othing elfe than that I wish God would make on a sudden a good Christian, so that it might f me nothing but the Desire and Resolution of being cb.

To resolve to be Good, and to stop there, is Truth to resolve always to be Wicked.

How many Sermons, how many Books of ery become useless, tho' they be folid and conncing. Whence comes it? From this, that ey who hear them or read them, carry nothing way but a flight Resolution of changing their ife.

You fay, that the Truth has touch'd you, and et you continue still the same; You are istaken, Truth has not touch'd you.

One would hardly think that Christians could er reach much deceive themselves, as to be content well, be littue, and that they should believe them-it would lives good, because their Hearts are easily

A Devout Woman thinks her felf persect, be-use she weeps at the Sermon; tho at her Re-e Mean um from it, she Scolds at all her Servants, and

they do the season at all her Servants, and they do they do they body.

He who is affected with a Sermon, is thought love for the season and not love for the season and n

felves afterwards; if one acts no better than the other, I efteem them both alike.

Some People seem to seek after Confessor, Preachers, and Books that are moving, only to have the Pleasure of being mov'd: There are some who go to Weep at a Sermon, or at Confession, just as others go to Weep at a Tragedy

That which makes the Value of a Christian' Tears, is not only the Motive that causes them tis the Effect they produce, and it is but of little Importance that something solid is the Cause of

them, if they produce nothing folid.

To Weep for ones Sins and not to Correct them, is not to lessen, but to increase the Guilt; Impenitency is never so surely an In sult of the Goodness and Mercy of God, a when it is sound in a Heart capable of bein mov'd and affected.

You Weep at the Sermon, you come from Confession all in Tears, and yet you still to turn to your Sins: Either your Tears must proceed only from a facility of Weeping, or you believe they will serve instead of Repentance.

There is none so far from Salvation as Devote, who has the Gift of Tears, and is not

Saint

Men commonly judge of a Christian's Sandt ty by his Tears; it were better to judge of h

Tears by his Sanctity.

§. 20. 'Tis only in what concerns their Salvation, we find Men take up with the Desire of a thing instead of the thing it self: Many Christians think themselves Religious, because of the Inclination they have to be so; But we see a Me

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Men think themselves Rich or Noble, because they have an Affection for Grandeur or Riches.

A Christian who cannot read a pious Book nor hear a Sermon without being mov'd, is no more a good Man by the Inclination he has to Piety; than a poor Man is rich by the defire he has for Riches upon feeing others live in Wealth.

We hear it daily faid, That a Man is a good Man, because he has an Inclination to Piety; it should be said likewise, that a Man is rich when he has a Defire for Riches.

We are not to measure Mens Sanctity by the Inclination they have for Piety, but by the Effects that Inclination produces. A Soul that is mov'd with a Discourse of God, if it goes no further, has at most no other Virtue, than that of being of a more tender Disposition than another.

6. 21. There are some Christians who love to visit Churches and continue long in them, as there are poor People who love to be in great Mens Houses. A poor Man is not the richer or more noble for his being often present at the King's Dinner, nor a Christian more a good Man for his being often at Church and at Sermons, if One does not make use of that Occasion for advancing his Fortune, and the other for advancing his Salvation.

One that has a Disposition to Piety, believes himself better than he who has none; but I think se of the him worse, if he does not make that Disposition

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They who are the farthest from Salvation, are not those who never resolve to change their Life, but those who take Resolutions every Day, and never put them in execution: There is Reason to believe, that He who has never resolv'd, will better execute his Resolutions when he shall once take them, than one who has as it were contracted a habit of failing in all his Resolutions.

A Woman that reads only Books of Devotion, and is nevertheless given to the Vanities of the World, is harder to be Converted than a Woman who lives in the Vanities of the World and reads nothing but Romances. It will require extraordinary Grace to convert a Heart that has abus'd all ordinary Graces; and when One has found a way to join the most Holy things of Religion with a vain and sinful Life, there are scarce any Means lest capable to make one change, or to give one a sense of the Guilt of such a Life.

How many Christians are esteem'd good by the Exercise and use of Holy things which

they abuse.

It is then to no purpose, will some say, to exhort those that live in the World, to the Exercise and Love of Piety, or to engage them to Resolutions of living better; since that serves only to remove them farther from Salvation.

This is the Conclusion Christians commonly make, when One talks to them of the Unprostableness of Resolutions that are never put in practice; they say, 'tis to no purpose to make a pious Resolution, but they should rather say,

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'is to no purpose to make it and not put it in execution. They condemn the Uselesness of Holy Resolutions, when they should condemn the Negligence that renders them useless. cannot say that a Holy Resolution is unprofitable, because it is Holy, but only because it is too weak and too inconftant. The Conclusion then which every Man of good Sense ought to draw from the Unprofitableness of Resolutions that are never put in practice, is not, that because Holy Resolutions are of no use to most Christians, therefore 'ris to no purpose to make them; but this, That because Holy Resolutions are unprofitable when they are not put in pradice, therefore One must execute them as well a make them.

The fame may be faid of all the Conclusions which are commonly drawn from the Conduct of those who live in the Practice and Use of Holy things: Men conclude 'tis unprofitable to have that Exercise or that Practice, when they hould conclude, that we ought to do all we can

to make them useful.

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Thus by a most absurd way of arguing, they justifie Negligence by that Reason which of all others condemns it the most, and instead of combating that Sloth which hinders the Execution of Holy Desires, they indulge it so far as neither to will, nor to defire, nor to resolve on my thing.

§. 22. There are more Reasons to oblige a Christian that would be a good Man to labour make a to acquire Virtue, than there are to oblige a Man that would become rich to labour to ac-

quire Riches. Some Persons have become Rich by the Beneficence of their Friends, or by Inheritance: but it is not thus a Man becomes good. Virtue does not descend by Inheritance, nor do we receive it as a Gift. God gives it, 'tis true, but he only gives it to those who labour to acquire it.

A Man cannot propose to himself the obtaining any fort of Good that requires more Application, Vigilance and Care, than Salvation does; Why then is Salvation the only Good that can excite nothing in Christians but slight De-

fires and ineffectual Resolutions?

'Tis an unaccountable Conduct to fay, that One wishes for a thing most difficult to be obtain'd, and to undertake it with less Courage. and employ less Pains in it, than for things that

are more easily acquir'd.

6 22. But some will say, 'tis the extreme Difficulty of working out ones Salvation that hinders Men from executing those Desires and Resolutions they might have to be sav'd. This is another Folly which People may eafily be made sensible of. For when you say you defire to be put th fensible of. For when you say you delire to be put the savid, what do you mean? Do you mean that were myou wish a thing impossible? No, if it was impossible you would not wish it, since a reasonablig'd ble Man does not think of wishing for a thing cause you impossible; if then you wish for Salvation you must believe it possible; why do you content Obligate your self then with a bare Wish? It is Possible, Wou but it is Difficult: You wish it because it is Possible, you content your self with wishing it be because I cause it is Difficult? Is not this the height of Folking richards.

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ly? Ought you not, on the contrary, the more difficult Salvation is, to be the less satisfied with barely wishing it? In a word, ought you not to do every thing rather than fit down with a bare Defire and a bare Resolution of being faved.

Christians grant that Salvation is very Difficult, and yet they act in fuch a manner as if the wishing for Salvation was sufficient to be saved.

'Tis you fay your Inclinations, 'tis the Affection you have for the World, 'tis the Habit you have got of Sin, that hinders you from executing what you resolve: You are mistaken, 'tis nothing but your Sloth; The more Obstacles you find in your felf to the Execution of your Defires, the more you ought to double your Diligence and Courage to accomplish what you defire.

'Tis here again that Men give, for their not This is executing their Resolutions, the very Reason that of all others should oblige them the most to be put them in Execution. If your Inclinations were not Evil, if you had no Affection for the was imworld, nor Habit of Sin, you would not be reasonablig'd to change your manner of Life: 'Tis beat thing cause your Inclinations oppose the accomplishtion you in your Resolutions that you have the greater content Obligation to accomplish them.

Possible Would a Man talk with any Sense that should it is Possay, I would fain be rich, because I am poor; but ing it be because I am poor, I content my self with the Desire of the of Foldering rich. Such is however the Language of ly Christians. We would fain live better, because we live

live

live ill, but because we live ill, we content our selves with the Desire of living better. Any Man of Sense who should hear one talk so, would say, that he who desires to be rich, because he is poor, ough likewise because he is poor, to do something more than barely desire to be rich; and for the same reason, would say to Christians, that which makes you desire to live better, should likewise oblige you not to sit down with the bare Desire of doing so.

It would feem by their way of speaking, the vicious Christians did think themselves privileg'd to live an ill Life, by the Evil they commit, and that all the Obstacles they find to the Execution of their good Desires, did appear to many Reasons for their not executing them.

The Difficulty of a thing is not a Reason in the not doing it to any but a Coward; and in one to think he is in the right not to execute Design, because it is Difficult, is to give for Reason of his Cowardise, the very Reason why he should have Courage.

We do not pretend, will some say here, to justifie Cowardise, we condemn it; but for all that we are still Cowards, and cannot because we are such, put in Execution the Desire we

have to live better.

To say that one condemns his Cowardise when he does nothing to overcome it, is a Contradiction; the only Person that can be believed to speak sincerely, when he says he condemns it is he who begins in earnest to do something to evercome it. That Refolutiving When You

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That which hinders you from executing your Resolutions, is your Sloth; 'tis therefore by friving against your Sloth, you ought to begin when you take your Resolutions.

You make a thousand Projects for leading a more Holy Life; you ought to make but one. which is to Study that which Nourishes your

loth, and to fet your felf to overcome it.

You fee an infinite number of Vices in you to vercome, but you forget that your Sloth is that which nourishes them all : Don't say I will beome more Humble and more Chafte; fay I vill become more Couragious and more Ferent; For 'tis by mortifying your Senses, by noderating your Sleep, by denying your felf thatever may gratifie your fenfual Appetite, by engthening the Time, and augmenting the ferour of your Prayers, that you ought to begin be Humble and Chafte.

A Christian who has never yet dar'd to do my thing to overcome his Sloth, feems fomemes furpriz'd, that he should be every Day aking of Resolutions and never able to execute ny. He would have much more Reason to be upriz'd, if he could execute any one of them, hile he continues Slothful; and it would be fire we he most extraordinary thing in the World, that Christian who continued still sensual should

fe when et be Chaste and Good.

Contra If a Christian who desires to be Good, would believe y what he thinks, it would be found that he estres to be Good without ceasing to have an thing to the World and to Sin; that is, that e wishes an Impossibility; and that what he calls

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calls a Desire of living a Holy Life, is at bottom nothing else, than a Desire of a Life in which Sanctity and Virtue would not oblige him to any Pain or Self-denial: If he look'd upon a Holy Life as a Life of Mortification and Self. denial, he would either forbear faying that he defir'd it, or he would begin to mortifie and to deny himfelf.

§ 24. Christians but faintly make a slight Resolution of living better, and yet from the very weakest Resolution they take, they propote to do all that they could be able to do, if they had the greatest Courage. They propose to overcome all the Vices they have, and to ac-

quire all the Virtues they have not.

To resolve to acquire on a sudden all manner of Virtues, is going as much out of the way as to resolve to acquire none of them; if you be really refolv'd to acquire all kind of Virtues, endeavour at first to acquire only one of them, but chuse that which is the most necessary for

The Resolutions of Christians are commonly weak and inconstant, for no other Reason than They will needs begin by what they should end; im be compared to resist the Temptations to Sin, when at most they are only able has or

to fhun them.

A Fear of Failing to execute a Resolution, is If the the first Disposition one ought to have at the making of it. A Care to avoid every thing that he Cause may hinder the execution of it, is the first Effect hange.

Which that Fear ought to produce.

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6. 25. If the Resolution you take to change our Life be fincere, you will begin to put it execution the very day you take it; if you y you will be more devout to Morrow, you begin to Day to be more recollected; if ou propose to practise a Virtue to Morrow, ou will beg Grace to Day to be able to do

A Christian who takes a Resolution of doing m the etter, will find something to do the very Moent he takes it; he is in the wrong then to do, if eler doing any thing till to Morrow. In the ropole soment you tell me you defire to change your to ac. life, you may, by elevating your Heart to God, g of him Grace to do it.

§. 26. A Christian who lives in Sin, has fo way as many Reasons to take a Resolution of living betyou be er, that he can find none to excuse his not per-

That which to Day incites you to a Refoluary for on of living better, ought likewise to incite ou to do it to Morrow; if you have reason to ay to fear Hell, you can have no reason to

order; Tis enough that a Christian has been once dend; onvinc'd, that he ought to live better, to make I make im be convinc'd of it always; and the Motives a has one Day to resolve to live better, are the me all the days of his Life.

ion, is If the Resolutions of Christians were always at the athat Motive and Principle which ought to be not that he Cause of them, they would not be liable to hange. That which makes a Man resolve to ay to live better, and no longer to resolve it

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to Morrow, is that his Intention proceeds from the Humour he is in, his Resolution passed with his Humour. One must therefore build pious Resolutions on Motives which will always last, and such are easily found; Whatever Humour a Man is in, 'tis true, that he ought to be afraid of Hell, and to work out his Salvation This Truth is as much a Truth for those where not in Affliction as for those who are.

Why did you take Yesterday a Resolution of living better? Dare you say 'tis because you were Sorrowful, and did not think of what you did: Can your Resolution seem to you to have been without Ground, and can you say you kneed to what you did, when you did the thing of the World the most important, and the most necessary? Perhaps you have reason to Day to be more Sorrowful, but you can have no Reason to forget the Resolutions which your Some made you take.

A Christian who in Adversity was convince that he ought to be a good Man, has a great Obligation than another to be a good Man

Prosperity.

From whatever Motive the Resolution of his ing better did proceed, a Man may keep it used on a Solid Motive; and one is always in the wrong, not to accomplish a Resolution that grounded on so solid a Motive, as the Fear an Eternal Misery, and the hopes of an Eternal Happiness, ought to be to every Man of Common Sense.

FINIS.

Reflections on Mens various Mistakes in the Practice of Religion.

Vol. II.

Of Repentance.

Cannot perswade my self that a Christian, who Believes and Understands his Religiation, can deceive himself so far, as to hope that he may be sav'd without Repentance, eneeds but a small degree of common Sense to myince him of the contrary. However to see the manner in which Sinners live, one wou'd link they look on Repentance as the most useless all Virtues.

At least among all the Virtues which they acnowledge Necessary, they put this in the last
lace; and in the Scheme of Employments and
ittues which Christians propose to themselves,
epentance is usually plac'd at the time of
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'Tis a great convenience in Religion, said a Person of Quality, some time ago, who has a great dea of Wit, that God is a Friend in Adversity; he is be found when all others fail us. This Person is speaking thus, said nothing but what almo all Christians think; they look on God as the last shift, when they can do no better, and per iwade themselves that they shall certainly fin him when they pleafe.

If the Christian Religion gave us this affurance it wou'd indeed be very commodious; and the wa to Heaven wou'd not be at all difficult, if w were never to think of Repentance till the tim

to which most Sinners put it off.

If I should take a fancy to say, That there is Religion in the World which allows its Follow ers, to refuse nothing to their Inclinations, love Riches and Pleasures, to be Unjust and D ceitful, and that all these Vices are in it accoun ed nothing, provided that one repents of having lov'd them but one quarter of an Hour befo Death: What Man of common Sense would n be amaz'd at the Idea of fuch a Religion?

Yet this is the Idea which those, who de their Repentance, make to themselves of t

Christian Religion.

But how extravagant foever the Idea of fuc Religion wou'd be, one might run a great f in it; every Man of Sense to whom I should present it, cou'd not fail of concluding, t there is infinite hazard in it, fince that quar of an hour's Repentance on which Salvation pends, is not certain; one may, after all, re not have time enough for that. I don't know w

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her a Religion in which Salvation shou'd deend on one quarter of an Hour, of which there as no great affurance, wou'd appear very com-

nodious and very fafe.

But I fay fomething yet more convincing, If christian Religion was in reality what I have ow represented it; If God had allow'd those, ho follow it, to plunge themselves in all kinds flices, and that he had only requir'd for Salation that quarter of an Hour's Repentance which Sinners hope for, I am certain there is not one of them, who wou'd not Despair of his alvation. Alas! wou'd they say, how can we alvation. Alas! wou'd they say, bow can we pe to be saved, when our Salvation depends upon u quarter of an Hour, which an Infinity of Accidents Follow That The from finding.

That quarter of an Hour's Repentance by thich Sinners are faved at their Death, is a frace that God gives to few, and is a kind of siracle: This again wou'd cause the Despair of inners, if their Salvation depended on it; for ou'd n beso it depends on a Miracle which God rarely does who de which in that case wou'd cause the Despair of inners, is the Foundation of the Hopes of those tho defer their Repentance. Sinners wou'd offly Despair of Salvation, if God must work a great r Miracle to fave them; and those who defer their hould depentance, only hope for Salvation, because and the Difficulty Men have to begin their Reation bentance, and the Delays they affect upon that, all, re not the Effects of Indolence, or Laziness, but

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but of the little Inclination they have to gain Salvation. There are Perfons known, who for Fifteen or Twenty Years, have promised to change their Life, and, who always put off the Conversion till to Morrow; yet they are the Perfons of the World, the most quick and active in all that concerns their Interests; they would not allow one quarter of an Hour's delay, when the term is expired, of the Payments they should receive.

To defer always till to Morrow, is a pernicous Maxim in any Business; all the Worldingreed on that, except in the Business of Salva

tion.

When People wish for a thing they alway fear to have it too late, and it may be concluded that they very little wish for those things which they always fear to find too soon.

Sinners say, That they will Repent at one time or other, and in the mean while do all they can to make it impossible for them ever to Repent

To fay I cannot Repent to Day, but I cand

it to Morrow, is a Contradiction.

Deferring our Repentance whilst we live, i Husbanding our Impenitence for the time of ou Death.

They who rely on Repenting at last, ofto Repent too late; one shou'd never expect to fucceed in a thing the first time one sets about

There was some Years ago a Man of Quality Executed in a City of Europe, who when he was Exhorted on the Scaffold to ask Forgiveness of God, That is done, said he, and I have nothing more to do but to Die. A Holy Man, who was

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k'd what he would do if he had only half an our longer to live, I would do then, answered , what I do now. How! faid they, wou'd ou not beg pardon of God? Yes, reply'd he. t in that I should only do what I do now, for there is one Moment of my Life in which I do not ask it. these Persons were sincere, and if they cou'd eak thus without Pride, they were truly Good fen.

Those only ought to be accounted good Men. ho do every Day what they wou'd do at their eath.

To believe we can do at our Death, what we m'd never do whilft we live; is to believe that e shall be stronger when we are weaker, and we more of the Grace of God, when we are ore Wicked.

A Man who fays he can do whilft he is Sick, hat he cannot do when he is in good Health. ews either that he has never been Sick, or at he is very unfincere: If he has had ever fo the Illness, he may remember that he was then capable of taking any thing to Heart, but the lefire and the Care of his Recovery.

Those Sinners who defer their Repentance I they are Sick, take that time to think on the oft Important and the most Difficult of all teir Affairs, in which Physicians forbid to think

Physicians commonly do not warn their Patithe wants to think of Death, till it is no longer time eness of think of it.

we shou'd no more reckon on the Repentance the war hich a Sinner expresses at the point of Death, M A

than on the Donation which he then makes of his Benefices or of his Estate: A Man, who thinking he shall Die, resigns a Benefice, constantly re-demands it if he Recovers. He is not more sincere in the Promises he makes to Good than in those he makes to his Friends, or at least they are made with no other intention; Whe he gave away his Estate, he supposed he should be gave away his estate, he supposed he should be gave away his estate, he supposed he should be gave away his estate, he supposed he should be gave away his estate, he supposed he should be gave away his estate, he supposed he should be gave away his estate, he supposed he should be gave away his estate.

If the Repentance which is express'd at the time be not an Effect of the Fear of Death, it an Effect of our complaifance for those who Enhort us to it; we consent to make our Consession, as we consent to take Physick or Broth Nature astonish'd at the approach of Death, as weaken'd by the Distemper she suffers, acts on

now by Foreign impressions.

A Man who has never stood in awe of the Judgments of God during his Life, has often be regard to them than to the Opinion of Me when he seems to Repent at his Death; and there is reason to sear, that a desire of complying with Relations, or with Custom, has most share in a Death-Bed Repentance, than a desire to satisfie and appearse God.

'Tis having very little Knowledge of the Oligations of Repentance, to allot that time for it when all the World makes it their Duty

Flatter and to spare us.

Every Body exclaims against easie and complaisant Confessors, but 'tis forcing them to be easie and complaisant when they are not call till the last Hour.

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He who conceives that Repentance ought to be Severe and Rigorous, must conceive at the same time, that it ought not to be defer'd till he is Dying.

The Facility with which Absolution is given to a Dying Man, is not founded on a Supposition, that he can at that time easily put himself into a disposition for receiving it: 'Tis only founded on the Thought, that God can then do a Miracle to save him.

To fay that 'tis a great Unhappiness to Die without Absolution, is to say, that 'tis a great Unhappiness to live without Repentance.

People are aftonish'd, when a Man, who has always liv'd viciously, Dies without Repentance, There is much more reason to be astonish'd when that does not happen.

Not to dare in the beginning of a Sickness, to advertise the Sick Person to think of Repenting, for fear of increasing his Illness, is to be more concern'd for his Health than for his Salvation.

A Sick Man who does not think of Repenting, has but little Idea of the Necessity and the Obligations of Repentance; but those have yet less Idea of them than he, who dare not advertise him to Repent.

To wait till a Man is very Ill before we will advise him to make his Contession, is not to be concern'd to have our Counsel sollow'd.

He who dares not advertise a Sick Person to make his Confession, for sear of vexing him, expresses rather the Impenitence than the Tenderness or ill Humour of the Sick; and the surest Elogy of a Christian's Piety, is to dare speedily

and

and boldly to say to him, Sir, Make your Con-

fession.

When People rejoice, that a Man has had leisure to Repent before his Death, they ought at the same time to be afflicted that he delay'd

fo long to do it.

A Repentance which is not made till the last Extremity, is a certain proof of an irregular Life, and a doubtful one of Salvation: There is more reason to be afflicted at that which is certain, than to rejoice at that which is doubtful.

All that is faid in Books and Sermons against the Delay of Repentance, is usually apply'd only to great Sinners, but it may be of use to all: Every one has something that he defers till Death; and he alone is a persectly good Man, who does not indulge one Irregularity, and who remits nothing to be done at his Death.

Of Confession.

NE is not advanc'd very far in having perswaded a Sinner not to delay his Repentance: The greatest Number of those who think they Repent, do it but little better than those who defer it.

What is it to Repent? If we judge by the Conduct of most Sinners, 'tis to make a Confession. And what is it to make a Confession? 'Tis to have the Courage and the Power to tell ones Sins

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People take for Repentance, that which is only a mean to it; and without having examin'd whether they have resolv'd to forfake their Sins, they think themselves acquitted of all, when they can have brought themselves to tell them.

Ask the most part of People in the World, what discourages them from Repentance; they will tell you, 'tis the difficulty of Confessing their Sins; ask those who are preparing for their Consession, what chiefly takes them up in this Examination, 'tis the Care of remembring their Sins, and of finding terms to express them. They forget what is most Essential, to Repent of their Sins, to take Precautions for leaving them, that 'tis by this Resolution they must begin, and that how exact soever a Confession be, 'tis vain and insignificant if it be not the Essect of such a Resolution.

In the Resolution of forsaking our Sins, one finds the Courage to tell them; but in the Courage to tell them, one does not always find the Resolution to forsake them: And a sincere Sortow for ones Sins is a shorter way to a remembrance of them, than a cold and calm Examination.

When one resolves sincerely to Sacrifice all in general that displeases God, one has no difficulty to find the particulars.

from the little Inclination one has to correct them.

To

To have Scruples about ones Confession, is not in the Language of the World, nay, even of the Devout, to be doubtful whether one has had Sorrow for their Sins; 'tis to be anxious, whether one has told them all; an involuntary forgetting of the least Sin gives more trouble to many Consciences, than their Inconstancy and their Relapses.

Persons on the matter of Consession, if they did not Consess their Sins till they had quitted the Occasion of them, or had try d themselves on

the Resolution to quit it.

The Infincerity of the Heart causes more Scrupulosity than ones Ignorance or Simplicity.

If the Resolution of sorsaking Sin, preceded Confession, People wou'd not accuse themselves of so many Trisles, and dissemble so many Im-

portant things.

I don't know whether Persons, who had no other Motive in going to Confession but Repentance, wou'd be so nice in the choice of Confessors, and so wedded to those they have chose.

The Law against changing our Confessor, which was Establish'd by the Spiritual Fathers as a Curb to Sin, is now become a Lenitive, and

a Consolation to it.

By the Constancy People have in keeping to a Confessor, they seek particular regards from him. Happy it is too if they stop there, and if by their Fidelity to a Consessor, they do not aim at soothing him to a Remisses.

A Confessor cannot without difficulty, put those to all the Rigour of Repentance, who have him.

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A Penitent, who makes Presents to his Confessor, and one who having a Suit at Law, makes Presents to his Judges; act both by the same Motive, and are guided by the same Views.

The Seriousness and the Godly Sorrow of Repentance, are Vertues the least shewn in the frequent commerce which some have with their Confessors out of Confession.

Those Persons who will never know or see their Confessors, are less Fantastical, than those who make them the Companions of their Table and of their Pleasures.

In the Visits which are made to Confessors out of Confession, we aim less at being obliging to them, than at rendering them so to us; and we engage their Complaisance for us against our Confession, by that which we have for them out of it.

People commonly impart their Affairs to a Confessor, only to divert his Memory from the Sins they have trusted him with.

A Confessor to whom his Penitents impart their Affairs, is mistaken if he thinks he owes that Considence to their Opinion of his Merit, and of his Capacity; he owes it only to the Shame, and the Pain they have to speak of nothing but their Sins.

Contession seems the Occasion in which one has most difficulty to speak, and yet there is none perhaps in which one Experiences more the difficulty some have to hold their Tongues.

There

There is no Action which one wou'd think shou'd more confound our Vanity than Confession, and perhaps there is none in which it finds more gratification. Who is there that in Confession accuses himself of having gone in fearch of Sin, and does not on the contrary, give to understand, that 'twas Sin came to feek him? For one word, by which one discovered with much ado, the Shame of a finful Action. how many are faid to fet off our Wit, our Merit or our Birth?

What Idea wou'd a Man, ignorant of our My. steries, have of Christian Penitence; if he faw the manner with which the Confessors Seats are belieg'd on Vigils and Great Holidays? All thele People (he wou'd be told) are call'd Penitents. that is to fay, Persons penetrated with the most lively Sorrow they are capable of, and in a flate of the greatest Humiliation they ever knew. They are even Essentially oblig'd (wou'd it be added) to this Humiliation and this Sorrow.

A Man to whom this Character was given of all those whom he shou'd see about the Confessionary, wou'd be strangely surpriz'd in seeing them Thrust one another, Quarrel, Fight to get in the first; in seeing a Gentleman-Usher, who conducts a Lady of Quality, imperiously drive away the Crowd of meaner Penirents, and fecure for his Lady a diffinguish'd Place to Repent in at her Ease, and beat her Breast commodiously; in feeing the Confessor himself assisting to a Vanity and to Distinctions, at which the rest of Idleness his Flock loudly Murmur: This Man, if he had prefent common Sense, cou'd not forbear crying out at benetrate

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fo odd a fight. Oh, amazing manner of being in Sorrow and Humiliation! And he wou'd think either that all which had been told him about Penitence was an Idle Tale, or that none of those Persons cou'd be Penitents.

This Disorder will be inevitable, whilst Peoele mean nothing else by Penitence, but a Coneffion made in hafte, and with Precipitation; whilst they are only determin'd to make that Confession by the arrival of a great Holiday; and whilst they defer making it as long as they can.

The Crowd of Penitents, the little time they will give to this Mark of their Repentance, and the defire they have to be foon rid of an Obligation that is burthenfom to 'em, will always give in our Churches the odd Spectacle of that tumultuous Penitence which befieges the Confessionary, and makes fuch a pother to get first into it.

What is it to go to Confession? 'Tis, in the Language of those who know their Religion, to to that which of all Christian actions is the most important; 'tis to change the Heart entirely. is to hate what one has lov'd, and to love what one has hated; 'tis to put ones felf into the State one wou'd be in when we are to appear at the adgment of God: Could a Christian who had his Idea of Confession, make it hastily, without at in at Reflexion, without taking all the time necessary oully; o put himself into so difficult a State; cou'd he rest of ldleness and Self-love? If all Christians, who he had out at energated with this Idea, wou'd they not appear

pear there with more Humility, more Modesty and Patience.

Nothing more refembles the Crowd that one fees at a Great Man's Levee, than the Throng of Sinners, which furround a Confessionary on a great Holiday; and I much fear that as we find in both the same Behaviour, so we may find in both the same Spirit and the same Designings.

The Diffinctions of a Confessor, give no less Vanity, than those which are received at a Great

Man's Levee.

To have an Unwillingness to commit a Sin, only because one shou'd be asham'd to Confessit, is having half committed it already; and a Christian who slies from Sin, only because he avoids Confession, does not avoid the Obligation to confess it. To say I wou'd do such a thing if I were not to confess it, is to make ones felt oblig'd to confess it, as if one had done it.

To be more concern'd for the Shame of Confessing, than that of committing a Sin, is to be more afraid of displeasing Men, than of diplea-

fing God.

God is not always first regarded in the Resolution Men take to go to Confession: The Decorums of a folemn Holiday, the Convenience of an Easie or an Unknown Confessor, the Desire to get rid of a weight that begins to be burthenfome; all this has often more share in Confession on, than a Defign to change and to amend one Life.

One wou'd think, by the manner that Christian who had ans distribute their Confessions, that the Grace who had of Conversion is only to be had on great Holi Jubilee

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days: Whatever Sin they have committed, they arely confess but on those Days; they look afar off to fuch a Festival, as the Period of Sin, and the Moment of Grace: Till that time they remain in tranquillity, nay often, the nearer the Festival approaches, the more they multiply the Sins they have resolved to confess when it comes.

Confession is indeed one of the best ways of elebrating a Holiday, but a Confession which one only thinks of on that Day, is not the way o celebrate it. In vain Men remit their Coneffion till the Festival is come; they are in no undition to make it, unless they have thought

fit long before.

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Finding an Easie or an Unknown Confessor, for Persons who are asham'd to Confess, a convenience that determines them to do it; but often in the affurance of very foon finding fuch Confessor, they commit without difficulty the sins which they are to Confess to him; and I have heard the Superior of a Monastery complain, that the Nuns were much less regular, as hey drew nearer the time in which extraordi-Decodary Confessors are given them: Persons have ce of an een known, who in going a Pilgrimage out of heir Country, have renewed by the way those ontesti Sins they went to Confess at the End of their Pilgrimage. How much does the hopes or the approach of a Jubilee facilitate Sin to those who Christian to find in at a Plenary Indulgence: One who had been solicited to ill for several Months, tell into it some time ago, only because the state of the sta

'Tis

"Tis the height of Guilt to make an allure both to ment to Sin, of that which was ordain'd for a tences of Remedy or a Cure to it.

The greater number of Sinners only take the fession, Resolution of going to Confession, as some Peo we seek ple take that of paying their Debts; when they skind pay their Debts, 'tis not that they resolve to the they borrow no more, 'tis often quite the contrary of Art at they pay a little Sum that they may borrow in exton a great one, they free themselves from a Debut an a which begins to be importunate, to gain Credit 'Tis if for making another: Thus the Conscience of sithe Residues. In Simplicity or Blindness, only distinct the Sinner, in Simplicity or Blindness, only dis the charges it self from the weight of its Sins, to it regu with less incumbrance; and I doubt whethe my of the Obligation of Confessing appears as trouble He we fome the Day after Confession as the Night be the Eastore; the quiet which a Conscience of the Eastore; the quiet which a Conscience of the Eastore Character finds after Confession, insensibly Did tell him. poses it to Remisness.

All these Disorders are only caus'd by the The salse Idea People have of Repentance; if they than the were throughly persuaded, that there is no Responsible of remissions where there is not a Change of the who has Heart, there wou'd be no abuses of Confession the write They wou'd not think of Confession till they had labour'd to change their Hearts. Confessions wou'd be less frequent, but they wou'd be tester in the same of the wou'd be better in the wou'd be better and off and even more frequent.

Nothing shews more, that the greatest part of what those who go to Confession think only of Confession, without regarding at all the Obligation and Pice of changing their Heart; than the care they take soing both

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allure both to find Easie Contessors, and to altege Prefor tences to be dispens'd with from the Rigour of
Penances. They endeavour to get over a Conake the effion, as out of such perplexing Affairs which
he Peo we seek to get rid of as cheap as we can. 'Tis
en they akind of Traffick, in which People think of deolive to giving, as in all others, and in which Cunning
ontrary of Art are not without their use: They look on
borrow in extorted Absolution as on a lucky Purchase,
a Deb of an advantagious Bargain.

Credi Tis not, to take it rightly, the Confessor who
ce of the Rule of what Penance is necessary for us,
ally distinct the Sin we have committed; on that should
to be regulated both the Obligation, and the Sevewhethe many of the Satisfaction we are to make.

He who seeks Abatements of his Penance from
the Easiness or Ignorance of his Confessor, reof the simbles that Criminal, who made all his Friends
only Did
tell him, that he was Innocent, whilst his Judges
condemn'd him to Death.

The Insincerity of Penitents has more share
if they han their Ignorance, in the choice they make
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of remiss Confessors, and I know an Author,
of the who has own'd to me, that during all the time
sets on the remiss Confessors, and I know an Author,
of the hand Pious Man.

Confessor, an Authority contrary to his own Lights,
better and often in consulting the Casuists, he only
thinks of making them say to him the contrary
part of what he says to himself.

thinks of making them fay to him the contrary

part of what he fays to himself.

of Con

A Lady of Quality Consessing to a very Able ligation and Pious Man, ask'd him if there was any ill in ey take soing to Plays, and in reading Romances; 'Tis

you must tell me that, answer'd the Confessor, Another Confessing to the same Person, begun her Confession by asking him if a Virtuous Wo. man might not fuffer her felf to be belov'd Make your Confession, said he to her, and you wi know that your self by the things you have to tell me These two Answers were very Judicious; Then is in Effect no Woman of the World who need any other Evidence but that of her own Heart to convince her felf that there is Evil in being Delighted with Plays and Romances, or with Lovers.

If I were ask'd whether the Penitent or the Confessor is the better Judge of the Nature and Penance of those Sins that are Confess'd, I show not always fay, that 'tis the Confessor.

Those Persons who seek unknown Confessor or disguise themselves to go to Confession, see as much to fecure their Remisness as their Ho nour, and not daring to be known is not less

spare the Sin, than the Shame.

In deceiving a Confessor on the Quality of ones Person, one often deceives him on that of ones Sins; a Confessor who judges of the Qua lity of his Penitent by the appearance unde which he shews himself, neglects sometimes to give him Remedies or Counfels fuited to hi Rank. He is not alone guilty of this Negligence it will be likewise imputed to the Person wh difguis'd himfelt.

The useless Recitals with which many encum ber the Confession of their Sins, proceeds les from a defire to speak of what they are Telling it be n than from the Pain they have not to do wha tomiles they wou'd very willingly not tell. Con

Con ecital ins, is bich l The Confess ain the all P ttentio n but t The nost co hey sho There ken to ot whe the S ith par

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Confessing Trifles, and joining the needless ecital of them with the Confession of Important ins, is a Mark of the little Sense and Sorrow hich he who Confesses has of his Sins.

The Trifles and Imperfections by which a onfession is generally begun, are a Prelude to in the good Graces of a Confessor, and whereall Preludes are only design'd to Engage the mention, they are scarce ever us'd in Confessibut to distract that of the Confessor.

The Sinners for whom Confessors have the of compliance, are generally those for whom

bey shou'd have the least.

There are few Confessors who having underken to bring a great Sinner to Confession, will or when they have prevail'd, remit fomething the Severity of the Penance; they dispense ith part of it, in recompence of the Vanity he s given them, by making his Confession to em.

Most of those who are thought to have conbuted to a great Conversion, have done noality of mouted to a great Convention, have done notified that of that of that of the light of that of the Quarter of the Quarter of the light of th ontents himself with it too.

encum It is easier to perswade Men to Consession eds les an to Repentance, but the first is insignificant it be not follow'd by the other; and he who o what somiles a great Sinner, that he shall be quit for

Confession, deceives him if himself is not deceiv'd The Reason why those who Confess relapse or grow remiss afterwards, is that they have scarce propos'd to themselves any thing else but to make a Confession. Promising Easiness in Repentance to those whom one wou'd Convert, is fometimes a Holy Artifice to gain them, but it is oftner a Means to make them Relapse, and to hinder them from making Satisfaction.

A Sinner who looks on Repentance as an Easie thing, is scarce any nearer his Conversion, than he who looks on it as a thing too difficult

Repentance will be Easie to none but him alone, who has undertaken it as the thing in the

World the most difficult.

The Obligation to fatisfie for Sins by Rigorou Mortifications may be foften'd according to the Measure of the Penitents Sorrow; but the Ob ligation to Reparation cannot be abated; th Confessor may remit something of the Severit of Penances, but he can remit nothing from that of Reparations. Every Injury, every Slan der, every Injuffice, every Scandal, ought ne cessarily to be Repair'd.

There can never be any just pretence for con tinuing a Scandal; a Sinner who defires that h may be suffered for amusement of the Mind, Converse with the Person who has serv'd toth disorders of the Flesh, is much in the wron and the Confessor who grants it him, is y

more fo than he.

Tho' one con'd affure themselves, that the given, Union of Friendship and of the Mind, which or to pals retains, wou'd never revive any other, one ought or other

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to deny themselves that, because of the Difficuly the World has to believe, that Two Persons who have lov'd one another Criminally, can love with Innocence.

In vain the Sin is cast off, if the Scandal is fill continu'd.

This is what Sinners are unwilling to fubmit io; we find them the same before and after Repentance, the same Correspondence, the same Visits, the same Confidents; they say there is now no ill in them. Every one fays fo, but no body believes it.

'Tis by the Appearance of Sin that Scandal is mis'd; the Appearance then must be chang'd, if one wou'd not have the Scandal continu'd, the World will always be Scandaliz'd, whilft it still kes that which gave the Scandal.

But to change our outward Conduct fay they. will be a kind of Scandal, 'twill be giving a Proof of the Sin which we have forfaken; and the World which fays there is Evil when we contiane to fee one another, will fay there was Evil. ance we have ceas'd to fee one another.

To call Scandal, that Proof which they pretend is given of a Sin by putting an End to the thath Scandal, is not to call things by their Names : Aind, to shew that one is Penitent, is not giving Scandal to the Publick, 'tis on the contrary giving wrong Edification to it; but tho' it shou'd be true that n, is you the Sinners Reputation wou'd be attack'd by this Proof; he has loft, by the Scandal he has that the given, the Right which he wou'd have had not hich or to pals for a Sinner: and fince he must one way ne ough or other lose somewhat of his Reputation, it is

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better to lose it by letting it be said that he has fin'd, than by giving occasion to fay that he still fins; betwixt the Scandal which his Repentance, and that which his Sin gives, he cannot hesitate to prefer the first, if he is truly Penitent.

Continuing a Scandal, for fear of giving Scandal, is a piece of Vanity, and the first disposition necessary to Repentance, is to difregard the

Judgments of Men.

Of Fervour.

HE Vertue which is most Preach'd to those who live a Christian Life is Fervour; its this which supports all the Vertues, but it often becomes their Destruction, and in the business of Salvation more than in any other, one does nothing by attempting to do too much.

There is no Vertue that feems more opposit to Laziness, to Self-love, and to Vanity, than Fervour: Yet there is none that accommodates follow it self more easily to all those Vices, or to speak Peevish more Justly, there is no Vertue of which those Before Vices borrow the Name with better Success, than such a

In the Language of the World, and even of 'Tis the greatest Number of Devotes, a Man is call'd the Co Fervent, who from the first Thought which he spire y had of being Good, will Undertake all, and En-Defire gage in every thing that has any Relation from Charit In far or near to Piety.

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In the Language of Christianity, and of the e still truly Religious, a Man is called Fervent, who having determin'd to become Good, enters on the way to it with Prudence and Precaution, and grows every day more ardent to follow the way he has taken.

There is no true Fervour without Prudence. but most Devotes pass for Fervent, only se far d the sthey are rash and imprudent.

'Tis not in having mighty Views, and in Undertaking a great deal, that Fervour confifts; 'tis in having Views proportion'd to ones Weakness, and in Undertaking little, but being firm in what one does undertake.

A Man who being engag'd to the Court by his Birth and his Employments, eagerly defires a Reo those direment, does not always give a Mark of his Ferwer; 'tis your, 'tis sometimes the Effect of his Laziness: A
tosten Woman who always having liv'd in Irregularities,
business throws her self into a Convent on the least Disne does grace, is not a fervent Penitent, but a presumpmous Sinner. A Devout Woman, who on the opposed first Fits of her Devotion, talks of Reforming her y, than heighbours, and her Friends, does not so much sollow the Fervour of her Zeal, as that of her property for the Before one shou'd follow the Transports of ess, than such a Fervour, one ought to have Sacrific'd the the Vices it Souths on which here will be the Vices it Souths on which here will be the Vices it Souths on which here will be the Vices it Souths on which here will be the Vices it Souths on which here will be the Vices it Souths on which here will be the Vices it Souths on which here will be the Vices it Souths on which here will be the Vices it Souths on which here will be the Vices it Souths on which here will be the Vices it Souths on which here will be the vices it souths of the vices it souths on the vices it souths on the vices it souths of the vices it sout

the Vices it Sooths, or which borrow that Name.

even of 'Tis not Fervour that shou'd make you leave is call'd the Court, make you retire to a Convent, or inwhich he spire you with Zeal for your Neighbour; 'tis the and Endesire of your Salvation, 'tis Repentance, 'tis on from Charity shou'd incite you: If you have these

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Vertues, 'tis very well, be Fervent; but if you have them not, be diffrufful of your Fervour.

Before one aspires to Persection, one shou'd be Vertuous, and before one undertakes Heroick Actions, one shou'd have done good ones: All the Fervour that is allowable to follow when one is not Vertuous, is that which animates us to become so.

This Man, says our Saviour, begun to Build and was not able to Finish, he attempted to raise a great Edifice without having the necessary Funds. What was the Event? The Building falls to Ruin, or remains Impersect; that is to say, one affected with the Loss of his Wise, whom he loved, and another with an Affront he has received, takes a Resolution of renouncing the World: One makes a retreat to be Built for him that has more the Air of a Tomb than a House, and to'ther takes the Religious Habit in one of the most rigid Orders: But two Years after the first leaves his Tomb, and repairs to the Court, and the t'other seeks a Dispensation from his Vows.

How many Ladies went to Bury the Poor a Year ago, whom we now find again at Balls and

Plays.

Great Disgraces, and great Affiictions, often remove one so much the farther from Vertue, as they brought one nearer to it on the sudden.

The Fervour one feels on those occasions is like a Tempest; before one can safely begin a Journey, the Storm must be dissipated, and the Tempest Calm'd: A Man is little in a condition to enter on the way to Salvation in the first transports of his Fervour.

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'Tis commonly said, one shou'd take advantage of their Fervour: I believe it might be said with yet more Reason, that one shou'd distrust it.

'Tis true, that God makes use of Affliction and Difgraces to disengage us from the World, and that in the difgust to it, which they give, one almost always feels a secret defire of Devoting ones felf to God; but this Desire is only useful to Salvation when one distrusts that Fervour, with which it is usually accompanied, Grace, but weak as yet, and which only appears strong, because it enters into a Heart agitated, and ill dispos'd to receive it; 'tis not the Grace one must be distrustful of, but the Ardour which accompanies it, and to profit by the Impressions that are made by any Affliction or Disgrace, one must let them relent, and put ones felf in a condition of distinguishing Grace from Natural Transports.

The time of Noviceship appointed in Monafleries is less design'd to nourish Fervour, than to

learn to distrust it.

'Tis not the manner in which one renounces the World that proves the Truth of our Vocation, 'tis the manner with which one sustains that Renunciation.

But Grace, you'll say, is an Enemy to Demurring and Delays; 'tis true, but before we banish all Retarding or Delay, we must be very sure that we are call'd by Grace; the Promptitude with which Mary Magdalene and St. Paul follow'd our Lord's Voice, is only commendable, because they were assur'd that the Lord had spoken to them.

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'Tis God, you say, that has spoken to you; you have no doubt of it. St. Paul too doubted less than you that he had heard the Voice of God, but Warm and Penetrated as he was by the Voice of the Lord, he went to be instructed before he declared himself.

But he who deliberates, you fay, never concludes any thing; but he who does not delibe-

rate often concludes wrong.

The things about which People deliberate, are commonly those upon which they shou'd not deliberate; and on the contrary, they will not deliberate on those which require Deliberation. You say, that God urges you to give your Self to him, and to leave the World; here are two things, do the first without deliberating, but deliberate on the second.

Generally a Sinner on his first desire of Conversion, has only great Views, to go live in Solitude, lie on the Ground, Fast, Watch, to have no attendants, to wear always one and the same Dress, allowing the Body no Ease, or it may be to serve the Poor in the Hospitals, to go Catechise in the Country, and perhaps even to pass the Seas, to Convert the Insidels; these are the Ideas with which a Sinner is taken up on his first thoughts of Repenting: He goes too fast, whilst one is yet in Sin, it is only allow'd to employ our Thoughts on the means to get out of it.

It is easier at the beginning of a Conversion to have great Views, and to aspire to great Virtues,

than to confine ones felf to little ones.

All those great Ideas of Heroick Actions, are generally Ideas of Vanity more than of Repentance.

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The Beginnings are not only painful, but they feem too obscure; they are dreaded, they are tiresome, 'tis forgot that they are necessary.

A Beginner thinks himself already in a condition to imitate, or to surpass a certain Vertue of some Saint, which in that Saint was the consum-

mation of a thousand other Vertues.

A certain Lady of Quality in the last Age, having read the History of the Holy Women, that went and shut themselves up by the Stable of Berblehem, was so touched with a Desire to imitate this Retreat, that she went from her House alone, and on Foot, to Embark and Travel to the Holy Land.

Iknow too a Man of Quality, who having heard that St. Francis had given all his Estate to the Poor, made a Donation of his to an Hospital, against which he is now at Law to have it; and another having read that St. Francis Xaviene had Suck'd an Ulcer of one that had the Plague, run every where seeking People with Ulcers, and that had the Plague: Those Vertues which these People propos'd to imitate, wou'd have been the first Vertues they had Practis'd, and the Lady who wou'd have gone to the Holy Land, had not eight Days before sorborn the Plays and Balls.

The reason why good Books and Sermons have so little Fruit, is, that they usually excite only a Fervour which is either over-strain'd, or not consider'd.

A Sinner, who is but half Converted, confiders the way to Heaven almost in the same manner as one who has no mind at all to be Converted:

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For my part, fays a Gentleman, or a Lady of the Court (by whom the Sanctity of those who are fel'd h Religious at Court, is suspected only because the Example of it condemns, and is a Lesson to them,) for my part, fays this Man, or this Woman, If 1 had a mind to give my felf to God, I wou'd not do it by balves, I would go and confine my felf in a Defarts Thus People speak when they have no design to reform their Lives, and they speak still in the fame manner when they begin to think of it ; A Language of Persons ignorant of the things they speak of; The Sinner who is but beginning to be Converted, knows little better the Obligations and Duties of true Vertue, than he who will not be Converted at all.

To propose to ones self such an Exalted Idea of Perfection, that one cannot attain to it, is a means either not to Enter into the way of Salvati-

on, or not to Advance in it when one is Entredamire
To know that the Fervour of one who begins
to be a Penitent, is only founded on his Vanity,
or his Presumption, one needs but observe how
than who
Unteachable that Fervour is; there is much more
ther to
difficulty in most Religious Houses to moderate
the Fervour of Beginners than to excite it, and
for one Cold and Slothful Person, who tries the
Patience of a Director, there are twenty HotHeaded ones that urge it to the utmost.

Measure

As Beginners are easily perswaded by their that Fer Vanity, that 'tis God who speaks to them in all givin the Ideas and Designs they conceive, whoever ome has contradicts their Ideas and their Designs, seem tions, it to them only to speak from the Devil; and with where a Devote who having well fix'd it in her lives.

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Nothing seems difficult to those who are sull of fervour, but it may be said, that the way to sink under Difficulties, is not to know their is any, or set to sear them.

To applaud a Penitent who begins, is to applaud too soon, He only deserves Applauses when a perseveres.

Fervour recompences a Christian for all the sations besigns he takes, and it is often his only Recompence.

The time in which great Conversions make

The time in which great Conversions make de Idea post noise in the World, is that in which they let, is a bou'd make the least. People admire a ChristiSalvation who Devotes himself to God; they cease to dmire him when he has Devoted himself: This begins preversing the Order of things. A Nun forgottenin her Convent, is more worthy of admiration we how han when all the World have their Eyes on her ther taking the Habit.

The Vanity which undertakes great Actions, it, and which gives the Spectacle of an extraordinaties the Change, finds another Vanity to applaud it.

The Vanity in undertaking things above our Measure of Grace, or in attempting great things, by their hat Fervour deceives us; it deceives us no less The time in which great Conversions make

by their hat Fervour deceives us; it deceives us no less in all agiving us a Relish for Novelties; and perhaps whoever ome had never given in to extraordinary Opis, seem ions, if they had less hearkened to the Fervour; and with which they thought of Reforming them to in her elves.

All

All that is new, is pleasing to Vanity and

The Devil often regains by Fervour, tho whom Fervour had fnatch'd from him:

None decide with more feverity in Matters of Morality, than those who begin to be Good unless those perhaps who have no mind to begin

As in beginning to be Vertuous, we easily fatter our selves, that we have already a great dealed Vertue, we easily accuse others of having but link

All the World is enough inclin'd to effect the Vertue of Beginners, and to judge advantagiously of it; but there is one who judges yet most advantagiously of it, and who effects it most than those who behold it, that is he who give them the Spectacle.

Fervour commonly raifes more Self-love the

it destroys.

Fervour makes one Esteem Novelties, and Is vent them.

A Man who begins to be Religious, forms a ready in Idea a Character of Sanctity peculiar thimself, which was unknown to the other Saint They think they shall be little distinguished following the Steps of others, they seek a waby which none has gone before them.

S. 1. As People run Fervour into an extream fo they run too into extream the Diffru which one ought to have of it; the World is fu of Christians who never begin, because they a strust their Power to go on, if they had begun.

A Man who stifles his Fervour, is more Cr minal than he who is Blinded by it, and not d ring to begin, is worse than being unable to finish He fulted not be on his both

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He who begins and does not go on, has confulted only his own Strength, and he who dares not begin has done just the same. One presumes on his own Strength, and t'other diffrusts it: both are wanting in the Principal, which is to look only on the Power of God.

He who shall govern himself only by the conideration of what God can do, will begin, and

arely stray when he has begun.

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He who, on the fear of not fucceeding in any worldly Busmess, undertakes nothing, is a slothil Coward: But he is much more fo, who dares not begin the Business of Salvation, for fear of not succeeding in it. God has not promis'd us Success in our Temporal Affairs, as he has promis'd it in the Affair of our Salvation; he often bandons the first to the Natural course of second Causes, but he takes himself the care of that of our Salvation.

To authorize ones felf in refolving never to legin, by the Relapses or Inconstancy of those who have begun, is to fhew that one resembles hem, and wou'd authorize that Resemblance.

The Defeat of a rash Officer, who without Experience has put in for and obtain'd the Command of an Army, authorifes none but Cowards not to ferve; a brave Man makes use of this Example only to ferve with more Prudence, and with more Courage.

There are some who dare not declare for Verthey a ue, ask them why, 'tis, fay they, that if we had once declar'd for it, we wou'd lead a Perfect ore Cr Life, and that appears to us impossible. This is sif a Gentleman who does not go to the Army,

shou'd say, that he does not go, because if once he went thither he wou'd Conquer Europe, and that appears to him impossible. This Man wou'd pass for an Extravagant, but I think he wou'd be less so than the other.

When an Affair is important, it is not in forbearing to undertake it that Prudence confiffs, it is on the contrary in undertaking it, and ma-

naging it well.

You have a disgust for the Life you have led hitherto, you wou'd change your manner of living; the Death of this Friend, the ill Success of that Affair, a Sermon you have heard has touch'd you; you think of it, you make Reslections on it, you even speak of nothing but the desire you have to live better: Why do you not begin to live better? 'Tis you say a Fervour that will go off; 'tis true, but this Fervour will go off only

because you will let it go off.

If all your Friends shou'd advise you to ask a Benefice, or an Office, if they shou'd press you to it, and all say to you, go belp your self, do some thing; if doing nothing, you shou'd excuse your self in saying, that the Fervour your Friends have upon it is a Fervour that will go off, what wou'd your Friends say? That which you foretel, wou'd happen, it's true, their Fervour wou'd go off, they wou'd leave you to your Stupidity, but whose wou'd be the Fault? Ought you to conclude from thence, that the Advice was not good, or that their Ardour was not sincere. A Man who shou'd make this use of it, wou'd deserve that his Friends shou'd no more express the same Care and the same Ardour for him, and it may

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be he wou'd not find the same Fervour in them another time: This is what often happens to these who have let the Fervour of Devotion cool without Profiting by it; God does not always send it them again.

But say you I have a thousand Times follow'd this Fervour, and am not the more advanc'd; this is as if a Man shou'd leave the Service after some Campaigns, because he is not a Mareschal

of France.

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If a Man who quits the Service for this Reason, hou'd say to me, that to be in the Service was not a certain way to become a Mareschal of France. I shou'd answer him, that not to be in

the Service is a way yet less certain.

The Conclusion you ought to draw from past Fervours is, that you should Profit by the present Fervour. You ought not to say, that the present Fervour is insignificant, because the others have been so; on the contrary, 'tis because the others have been insignificant, that you ought to take care that this may not be so; the more Experience you have on that, the more attentive you should be to make a good use of it: A Man who does not Profit by the first Grace is much less condemnable than he who does not Profit by the second.

If you remember the Infignificance of your first Fervours, you remember two things, the One that you were inclin'd to have given your self to God, the Other that you have not done it: Retain that of these two things which is Good, and remedy that which is Evil, retain the Will of giving your self to God, and take Precautions

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against that which hinder'd you from doing it. Don't fay that you were in the wrong, to have design'd to give your self to God, since you have not done it; this wou'd be very ill Reasoning; but fay that you have been in the wrong not to. give your felf to God, fince you have had Reason to design it, maintain what is Reasonable, and

repair what is Wrong.

6. 2. Whatever false steps Fervour has made one take, one may find wherewith to redress them in the Motives of that Fervour : An indiscreet Fervour has engag'd you in a state which you cannot get out of; what was the Principal Motive of that Fervour? 'Twas, fay you, to ferve God with the more Perfection, retain this Motive and you will support the State you are Engag'd in.

A remiss Monastick is not a Man weary of the ftate he is in, 'tis a Man who Repents of having had the Will to ferve God; if he had still the same Will, he wou'd not be weary of his

ftate.

A Monastick who imagines, and who seeks another Perfection than that of his Profession, is not one who aspires to a higher Perfection, 'tis one who is weary of that which he has undertaken.

Say to a Person who Blindly follows his Fervour, who full of mighty Views thinks only of extraordinary Vertues, lay to him, that perhaps it. T this Fervour is the Effect of his Vanity, or his Monal Prefumption; he will always maintain to you, the Ho that he is only animated by a real Defire of Serv- to ask ing God with more Perfection: But two Years

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after, if this Person has engag'd himself in a state that he wou'd now leave, you may fay as much as you please to him, that it was only the Motive of serving God that engag'd him in this state, he will now maintain to you, that it was only his Vanity and his Presumption.

One is not commonly fensible of the true Motives of a falle Fervour, till it is no longer time

to remedy it.

All remiss Monasticks say, that they knew not what they did, when they engag'd in their Profession, they forget that there was time given

them to know themselves on that Matter.

It is fo much the more dangerous to follow a Fervour that is only founded on Vanity, that one finds another Vanity which supports it: Thousands have indiscreetly taken the Monastick Vows who have nothing left to make them perlevere but the Vanity of not belying themfelves. 'Tis the height of Blindness and Presumption, to support ones felf in that Holy State only by Vanity, when one may persevere in it on fo many Pious and Solid Motives, and nothing is more unhappy than a Man who needs the World to live out of the World.

What ought we to call the Defire which certain Monasticks have to appear in the World, and the care they take to render themselves agreeable in it? A Publick Reparation for having left erhaps it. The World no more effeems the Care that or his Monasticks have to Please it, than a Man esteems o you, the Homage of an Enemy whom Interest obliges

Serv- to ask him Pardon.

That

That indiscreet Fervour which engages in rash Designs, finds a more indiscreet Fervour than it, which is that of Directors, who guide, or who inspire these fort of Designs.

If there is Vanity in quitting the World with Noise, and giving the Spectacle of an extraordinary Change, there is more Vanity in Coun-

felling and Affifting to it.

The Vanity of the Director commonly finishes what the Vanity of the Penitent had only be-

gun.

'Tis not only out of Vanity, that some Pride themselves in having supported indiscreet Fervours, with their Counsels and their Cares; 'tis likewise by Cowardice and Hypocrise: A Man who has not the Courage to undertake great Designs himself, will at least seem to contribute to those of others; he thinks that his Zeal will make amends in the Judgment of the World, for his Remisness or his Irregularity.

Those who Counsel Sinners to the most extraordinary things, are not always the most

Pious Men, but the most Hypocritical.

To fay that a Director is more Severe than others, is commonly to fay, that he has more

Vanity, and less Vertue.

Severity in Matters of Religion and Penitence, does not admit of the more and the less, the Bounds of it are regulated according to the Dispositions and Necessities of Sinners, and they who pass those Bounds are often either Ignorant, or Hypocrites.

Those Monasticks who are become Remis, generally disswade others from that Profession who

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emis, effion who who are inclined to Engage in it, they forget that others may be more fervent than they are

Those who continue Fervent, wou'd have all the World be Monasticks, they forget that others

may become Remifs.

'Tis not for either of them to Govern and to Judge of Vocations, 'tis for Men of Prudence, Knowledge, and who are Difinterested: but where is the Man who is Difinterested when he Governs a Vocation? Every one has at least the Interest of wishing to succeed in it.

Almost all Monasticks have an Interest which Blinds them; that of drawing others into their Community: For one who seeks a Companion of his Sanctity, there are ten who seek Com-

panions of their Remisness.

I have feen Persons very Virtuous, and very Pious, who wou'd determine Young People to take the Monastick Vows, whose Fervour inclin'd them to it, without ever troubling themselves about the Goodness of their Vocation; they will make a Vertue of Necessity, said they, when once they are Engag'd, and how Remiss loever they may be in a Convent, they will fill be better than if they had staid in the World. I doubt whether the Injury that is done to the World by Reasoning in this manner, is fo great as that which is done to the Monastick Profession it self: That which one gains by this Conduct, is to take from the Irregularities of the World, to place them in Monafteries.

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'Tis

'Tis extreamly difficult to govern ones felf well when one is full of Fervour; but 'tis yet

more difficult to govern others well.

There is scarce any thing which our Saviour has said, that is more abus'd than these words, He who puts his Hand to the Plough, and looks back, is not six for the Kingdom of Heaven; this is made use of to authorise all imprudent Designs, and our Saviour spoke only of Designs that are Wise and Prudent.

If in the Christian Religion it is not permitted to go back, that is only when one has taken

the right way.

Being desirous to serve God in the State to which one is called, endeavouring every Day to serve him with more Persection in that State this is true Fervour; all that is beyond, is generally Vanity, Caprice, or Presumption.

He who undertakes little, is commonly more

Fervent than he who undertakes much.

There needs more Fervour to reduce one felf to walk step by step to Vertue, than to undertake to sty all at once to Perfection; and it there are some, who, as the Scripture says, bar been Perfect in a short time, they are only those who have had Courage enough to neglect in Means of being so. They became Perfect in a little time, only because they apply'd themselve to attain Persection, as to a thing that require a great deal of time.

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Of Devotion.

IS as necessary to resolve to be Devout. as to resolve to labour for ones Salvation: To be Devout, is to defire to be Saved, and to neglect nothing in order to it.

To fay that one will endeavour to be Saved. and that one will not be Devout, is to contradict ones self. Devotion is to a Christian the fame as Application to ones Employment, or ones Trade is to any Man whatfoever.

To fay that Devotion is a Vertue of Supererrogation in a Christian, is to say, that to be a good Judge, is a Vertue of Supererrogation in Magistrate.

People cannot bear in the World, a Man of what Profession soever, who is negligent in his Trade, or in the Duties of his Office; and they make no account of a Christian's not being Devout, let them then affign the difference.

To make no account of being Devout, is to dispise the Character of a Christian.

When one exhorts to Devotion, it is thought that one exhorts to fet up for it. This is what makes People averse to it.

I cannot be Devout, (fay every day Ladies of the World,) and don't speak to me of it, I shall never be fo; but I will be a good Christian, and will , is ex bave nothing to reproach my felf for, on the Duties of my Religion. If Persons who speak in this manner spoke sincerely, none wou'd be more Devout than they.

Moft

Most Christians who live well, are only un. willing to give themselves to Devotion, because they look on it as a kind of Profession which offends them; but they are often fo much the more, or Devout, or fit for Devotion, the more repugnance they have to fet up for, or pretend to it.

There is nothing ill in Devotion, but the Va-

nity of fetting up for it.

A Fidelity and Constancy in Vertue establithes to a good Man, a kind of Profession not otherwise; one finds himself engag'd in this Profession without having sought it, and without being vain of it.

It is good to profess to be Devout, but it is only allowable to profess it when one really is fo: Most People look on that Profession as they do on all others; to profess an Art or a Science, 'tis enough to have the Provision and the Title

act

In professing to be Devout, People fall into all the Faults common to those who pretend to any other Profession; a Man who professes a thing, generally feeks only to be valued for his Profession; he applies himself less to the thing splore it felf which he Professes, than to the Glory of PPY W professing it: The Profession of being a Man of they Learning, is maintain'd by Pride and Positive-ontradiness, that of being a Man of Quality by Pomp thers that of Shew, that of a Friend by little Cares and larger, and that of Devotion by all these langer, things together.

To take Pride in Devotion, is not to have A Management of the Devout: To affect a Pomp or shew of being

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ly un. Devotion, is to be convinc'd that one is not pecause Devout : And to limit ones Devotion to little which Observances, is to be ignorant what one must do ich the obecome so.

There are many who wou'd have become Deout, if they had not fet up for being fo; but here are yet more who wou'd not be fo, if bey thought they were not allow'd to fet up or it.

They who wou'd be Devout that they may ake an appearance of it, will never be fo; ey who are truly Devout, will make it appear, ithout designing to do so.

Be a Christian and you will be Devout; but the care to refolve on being Devout, before

ou think your felf a Christian.

Taking Devotion for a more particular and ore exact Practice of Christian Duties, it is e Title commonly referr'd to those who comparatively the comparative comparatively the comparative comparati ad those who most excuse themselves from it,

tend to realways those who have least right to be excessed from it.

For his people who live in the hurry of the World, eplore the danger of their State, and call those apply who are retired from the World, and they refer Devotion to the last; this is to contradict themselves: That State has of all there is the most need of Devotion, in which tere is the most danger; to be in a State of langer, is to be under an Obligation of being devout.

o have A Man who does nothing, is to blame for r shew ot being Devout; but a Man who is very

busie, is not less to blame than he, when he

neglects Devotion.

A Lady Born at Paris, and who by her Marri. age, or her Affairs, is oblig'd to live in the Country, without Pleasures or Diversions, in the midst of Strangers, to whom her Merit serve only to incense them, and to make them he Enemies, is to blame if the does not give to De votion fo many Hours that she knows not how to Employ: But a Lady who lives at Paris, of at Court, in the midst of Pomp and Pleasures and every Day furrounded by agreeable Friends is more to blame than the other, not to flea fome Hours from fo many useless Occupation to give them to Devotion.

Devotion ferves to employ the Idle, and to unbend the Busie; it makes one avoid both the Vices of Idleness, and those of a hurry of Bu

finels.

People blame a Lady in Years, when h does not give her felf to Devotion; why fhou they not blame a Young Person on the same at count : Having little Devotion is not less an It regularity in one, than in the other.

Devotion is not thought of till the World de ferts us, there is more need of it when the Worl feeks us : Old Age has perhaps Securities again Irregularity, but Youth has only that of De

votion.

Devotion is put off to Old Age, but there

great hazard of not finding it then.

The Devotion of Young Persons, is gene rally better, and more fincere, than that Old People; why shou'd we not take that

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me to practice this Vertue in which it is eft.

Most Old People have only a Devotion of hew, or of Necessity, because they have needed the time in which it wou'd have been eal and Voluntary.

To look on Devotion as the Vertue of a cerin Age, or of certain Professions, is to have oldea of Devotion.

Nothing shews better that one seeks only the outlide of Devotion, than referring it to Old

Most People do not look on Devotion as a hristian Vertue, they look on it only as a Deency, either of Old Age, or of Adversity.

If Age ferv'd as much to regulate the Heart. sto reform the Out-side, one wou'd be less to ame, in referring Devotion to Old Age: But the Heart was disorderly in Youth, it will be at more fo when one is Old: The Decenis of that Age respect nothing but the Outde; and the Heart which is regular only out Decency, is not regular. You are exhorted live more retir'd, and lay aside your Pomp; ou will do it, say you, when you are Old, hat is to fay, you will not let Devotion have be Glory of your Reformation: If you shou'd deform in your Old Age, it will not be because you are Devout, it will be because you are Old.

To flay till we are Old before we will be Derout, is to feek to fosten the Difficulty, and to

is gene diminish the Worth of our Devotion.

To look on Devotion as an Obstacle to cerke the thin Employments, is to have an ill Idea of De-

votion, or to give an ill one of the Employ ment one Exercises.

To say that one cannot be Devout when on is either a Prince, or a Magistrate, or engagin the Army, is to say, that one cannot be either a good Commander, or a good Magistrate, or a good Prince.

To fay that Politicks is incompatible with Devotion, is to be persuaded of its Injustice.

Devotion cuts off in every State what there of Evil in it, and perfects what there is of Good He who says that he cannot sustain the State his in, and be Devout, proves that his State hanothing of Good in it.

The most part of those, who in resolving the Devout, resolve to change their State; know little better the nature of the State they leave

than they do that of Devotion.

Changing ones State, is oftner an Effect of Laziness, than of Devotion.

It costs less pains to leave a State, than t

live up to the Perfection of it.

The Sacrifices, which are looked on in the World, as Marks of a great Courage, are some

times Marks of great Cowardice.

The Fear of God causes many Retirement but the Fear or the Hatred of Labour cause more: People often chuse for want of Courage that State which of all others requires the most and Devotion ill understood, offers to Youn Persons a sure means of freeing themselves from the importunity of those Exhortations which excites them to Labour.

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If the first Sentiment that your Devotion gives ou, is a Sentiment of Laziness, distrust your pevotion: You will leave the Court, Why? ecause you wou'd be Devout: If the Court is Obstacle to Devotion, leave the Court, you ight to do it; but if you can be Devout and

main at Court, do not leave it.

Most People in their Resolutions for Devoon, think less of conforming themselves to the Vill of God, than of making the Will of God endescend to theirs; God has plac'd you at ourt, and wou'd have you be Devout there, d you will leave the Court to be Devout. ou will follow your own Will, when God ou'd have you tollow his: Perhaps you may ave the Court and yet you will not be Deout; because you will not then be in the State which God had affign'd your Devotion. Others feem to compound with God, they

willing to do what God requires of them, at they defire that God shou'd first do what ey wou'd have him: We have known an Ofeer in the Army, who had promis'd to God. at he wou'd be Devout when he shou'd be a lareschal of France; and every Day one may nd this odd unaccountable Folly, when one rement this odd unaccountable rolly, when one is required the Disposition of those who defer courage heir Resolutions of Devotion; as one makes it he most spend on a Mareschal's Staff, there are Thounds who six it to the gaining of a Law Suit, lives from the sound of the standard of th usines.

There

There are others yet more odly Foolish than thele, who make their Devotion depend on a liss on thing impossible, and I know a Woman, who waited to be Unmarried that she might become Devout.

There are no true Obstacles to Devotion but those that can be overcome; all others are pretexts of Laziness and Cowardice; when ever Man really cannot change his State, he can be come Devout in it.

There are some who look on the State they are in as an Obstacle to Devotion, and pretend they cannot leave it, tho' there is nothing they cou'd do more eafily; how many do we fee a Court, whom the Court has nothing to do with who boast that they cannot leave it; the Vani ty or the Idleness which engages them there has more force to retain them, than the Contempt they meet with has to remove them from thence.

Of all the Obstacles to Devotion, the only invincible ones are those which we will no overcome.

Men commonly fall into two contrary Ex treams, with respect to the State they live in The one fay, that their State has nothing in i incompatible with Salvation; and the other fay that their Condition is absolutely contrary to it Neither of them commonly understand either their State, or the Obligations of Religion: T think that there is nothing in ones Condition dangerous to Salvation, is fometimes a greate Obstacle to Devotion, than to think it is contrast to Religion; I fee no danger in my Condition Devo

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d on a lys one; and I fee nothing but Peril in mine, ays the other; they deceive themselves perhaps become qually, or if one deceives himself more than he other, tis he who fees the least Danger n it.

There is no Condition in which there is fo are pre. There is no Condition in which there is so never a title Danger as not to need Devotion, there is can be some in which there is so much Danger as to be tile Danger as not to need Devotion, there is

nconfiftent with Devotion.

Whether the Danger of your State proceeds fom the Nature of your Heart, or from that of our State, the Obligation is equal to leave it if ou can; but before you change your State, on must change your Heart: People do just be contrary to this, they begin by changing heir State, and they neglect their Heart.

Often one only changes his State that he may

ot change his Heart.

If a Man chang'd his Heart before he chang'd is State, perhaps he wou'd not change that at : He wou'd foon find the means to be Deout in it.

Changing ones Heart to rectifie ones State, is

live in much furer means to become Devout, than ag in i manging ones State to rectifie the Heart.

Before one resolves to change his State to become Devout, one must examine and well uneithe affand three things: The State which one waves, that which one takes, and the Character and true Devotion; to be Ignorant of either of greate three, is to expose ones self to make a rash addition described dangerous Change.

Devotion is a constant Application to the Virfay was of ones Station, and most of the Devout go out

out of their Station in the Virtues they practife: He who was found at Prayers in a Chappel, when he shou'd have been at the Head of the

Army, was he Devout? No certainly.

A Mistress of a Family is much prais'd for Devotion, she is (fay they) an admirable Person, who has a continual Presence of God: I go into her House, I see no Regularity, no Conduct in it, Debts multiply there, not one of them is Discharg'd, Children, Servants, all is in disorder: In going out, I say, this is not a Devout Woman, or at least I suspend my Judgment on her irregular Devotion.

Devotion is, in most of those who profess it, nothing but a change of the Scene, and of the

Theatre.

They renounce great Engagements, but they cultivate little ones; they quit the Pomp and Oftentation of Furniture and Equipage, but referve all the Ease and Convenience of them; they fly the Tumult and Noise of much Company, but they secure to themselves an agreeable and chosen Society; they Sacrifice something and they pay themselves for the Sacrifice by the Glory of having made it; they keep the same Spirit in all that they referve, which reign'd in that they have Sacrific'd; they have all the Tenderness and Application for their little Engagements, which they had for the greatelf, they give themselves up to Ease and Convenience as they had done to Pomp and Oftentation in the Societies they chuse, they have all the Regards and little Arts of the World, and per haps the more Occasions they have Sacrific'd of acquiring

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acquiring Glory, the more they are Vain, Captious, and Senfible, on those which they have referved.

They even grow fonder of them, and the Spinit which reigned in those things they have Sacrificed, gains new Forces after the Sacrifice. The most Criminal Engagements have less of Tenderness and Opiniatrety, than those which Devotion makes to pass for Innocent. Woman more eafily pardons in her Servants the Negligences which take fomething from her Pomp, than a devout Woman pardons those which take any thing from her Convenience; Politicks and Mystery are less in use in the Commerce of the World, than in that of certain Devotes; and never did the Point of Honour cause more Disputings, Quarrels, and Coldness, than in the Vanity of one devout Man and a devout Woman.

One wou'd never have done, if they shou'd run through all the Vices which Men authorize and confecrate by Devotion; Laziness, Idleness, Fondness of their own Opinion, Selfishness and Revenge, are the most common of them.

A Cowardly and Lazy Temper finds in Devotion a decent Sanctuary, by this one shelters himself from the Reproaches, which in the Republick of Men, a Man who does nothing deferves: A Country Gentleman whom Men of Honour cannot look on without Indignation, when he has not the Courage to Serve, makes his Cowardice be Esteemed when he covers it nd per- with the pretence of Devotion. Every body is fic'd of Ingenious at blaming the Idleness of a Woman

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of the World, who has no other Business but to grow Weary alone, or to Tire others with her The Visits; but no body says any thing to those who of his E go regularly two or three times a Day to tire of it by themselves in a Church, or to tire the Directors be, aut who will hearken to them.

This Maxim, that a caring for the things of the World, is unworthy of a Christian, as Holy and as true as it is, is more pernicious to the abin; Conscience of devout Persons than to their E. a Constitutes, and often those who neglect the Care of it on Temporal things, wou'd neglect them less, if the territhey did not at the same time neglect what concerns their Salvation. A Negligence of the one often draws on that of the other: There is nothey have thing to which one more easily Habituates himself, than to Laziness, and he who is Lazy for one thing, becomes easily so for another.

How well had that Saint penetrated both the Infine Nature of the Heart of Man, and that of Devotion, who said, That we ought to Act as if there it go were no Providence, and to conside in Providence as if we had not Acted. This Maxim, that a caring for the things of

dence as if we had not Acted.

Most of the Devout take only one half of this most wife Precept, and 'tis not the last part they oftenest chuse. I believe there are yet more Interested, than there are Lazy and Negligent among it; 't the Devoted.

The Favourite Virtue with most of them, is their that Justice which allows to take what belongs to his to us where ever one finds it, and of all the Precepts of Charity, the most to their Taste is that the B of beginning at Home.

The

The Holy Use which a devout Man can make ofe who of his Estate, and the ill Use which may be made to tire of it by those whom he thinks less devout than Directors be, authorizes many Vexations, and much Iniustice.

Giving any Respite to a Sinner, who owes Moas Holy by, in the opinion of many Devotes, is giving it
to the oSin; and as they do not think that a Man can
their E. Conscience keep what he owes, their first Care
Care of it to make themselves be Paid as soon as ever
less, if the term of Payment is expir'd.

Devotion unites a Man with God; most of
the one the Devotes only acknowledge this Union when
the is not they have occasion to Revenge themselves, they
ses himsers was done themselves that God partakes of the
s Lazy him Gause, is Revenging the Cause of God.
both the lastine, as they easily flatter themselves that ooth the la fine, as they easily flatter themselves that f Devo- God Acts in them, and by them, they cannot if there at go what their Heads are posses'd with, and Provi- they look on all those who oppose their Sentiments and Defigns, as People oppos'd to the Spif of this m of God.

hey of-the Inte-last Reseation, if I had not found Examples of among it; 'tis, that the Devout sometimes deceive themselves so far, as to look on themselves in hem, is their Devotion, as Persons dear to God, and belongs to his Interests; and that on this Extravagant he Pre-vanity, they think they have a right to indulge is that the Body, to sortisse their Health, and prolong their Confervation. I have seen some authorize The their Sensuality by this Principle: As there are many of them, who love themselves, and who da

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s but to

do not deny themselves any of the Conveniences of Life; perhaps there is more among them than is thought, who have the same Vanity and I don't know whether the Directors them felves do not Inspire it, when one hears them fay, as they so often do, to a devout Person of a tender Health, Sir, you must be careful of you

felf for the Glory of God.

'Tis easie to inform ones self what true De votion is, when one wou'd be devout; there needs no more than to read two or three Chan ters of the Gospel: If 'tis too much to read them throughout, be as little Children; be in a con tinual Watch, bear your Cross, and bear it con stantly every Day, deny your self perpetually be poor in Spirit, that is to fay, have the Spirit of Poverty, and allow your felf only the necessa ry use of Worldly things, surmounting all Affe ction for them, love your Enemies, &c. fuc are the Principal Duties of Devotion, 'tis only on these terms that it is allowable to pretend to it.

False Devotion proceeds more from Ignorand of the true, than from the Abuse of it, and there are more Christians, who will be Ignorant of the Precepts I have been speaking of, than there are who know how to abuse them. think that a devout Person, who believ'd that Devotion confifts only in a Contempt of one felf, in Watchings, in Simplicity and Poverty Spirit, wou'd be Vain, Idle, Opiniatre; and certainly he wou'd never pursue a Law Suit with Obstinacy, or seek to Revenge himself, if he had learn'd to be difengag'd from the things of the World, and to love his Enemies.

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A Christian who has not yet begun to practise these Precepts, ought at most to content him-felf with the Character of a Man of good Intentions, and leave that of Devout to those who to practise them.

There are Christians who put on all the Replarities of Devotion, without being devout; they have all the Body (if one may so speak) of Devotion, a great Exterior of Penitence, great Sweetness in their Behaviour, great Zeal, and a great Simplicity, which appears even in their sate and Air: One may have all this without living the Spirit of Devotion: The Spirit of the World may animate and give Motion even to the lody of Devotion, but the Movements of this lody animated by the Spirit of the World, are like those of a Machine, which only moves by Artificial Springs; they are neither constant nor regular.

Who can decide, when he sees the whole Exterior of Devotion move, by what Spirit it is animated? God only knows it, and none are allow'd to judge of it, but the Person himself, who sets all this Exterior in Motion; 'tis he must tell us what he thinks of it, all others may be mistaken in it; and himself too may as well as

others be mistaken in it.

§. 3. To say that a Man who appears devout is not so, is of all Judgments the most rash; and a Man of good Sense, wou'd never make this Judgment if he were without Malice; nothing can induce one to accuse the Devout of Hypocrise, but a desire that they shou'd be Hypocrites.

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A Man who judges, and who speaks ill of the Devout, establishes less, by his Discourse, an Opinion of their Hypocrific, than of his own Viciousness or his Malice; and when I hear one Affirm as a certain Truth that fuch and fuch devout Persons are Hypocrites, I have a much worse Opinion of him who speaks thus. than of those he speaks of: He gives me but a doubtful Opinion of their Hypocrifie, but he gives me a Certainty of the Rashness. or of the Malice of his Judgment : I may judge favourably of the Virtue of these who appear Devout, but I cannot judge favourably of the Temper, or of the Heart of him who difcredits them.

But the Pictures (fay fome) that are Drawn of false Devotion, serve to make one discredit all the Devout. est, 2 of Countained and atolite

To speak thus, is to say, that there are no truly devout Persons in the World; for the Pictures that are Made of false Devotion can only discredit those who are represented in those Pictures: He who looks on the Descriptions of false Devotion, as an occasion of discrediting the Devout, does more Injury to the Devout, than he who makes those Descriptions; and to fay that they may be apply'd, is to have made the Application already, or giving occasion to do it.

Perhaps there wou'd be reason to say, that the Descriptions of false Devotion may do Injury to the true, if he who makes those Pictures shou'd represent some devout Persons in particu- to salfe lar; but whilst the Characters are general, to los it; lay

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fay that they Injure the Devout, is to fay, that all the Devout are represented in them: Or if he who makes these Descriptions, shou'd have the Imprudence or the Malice to design representing some particular Person, he cou'd only do Injury to him whom he intended to represent; to say that the Picture of one Hypocrite, injures all that are sincerely Devout, is to contradict ones self, 'tis to say, that all the truly Devout, resemble a salse Hypocrite.

But, fay they, the Wicked make an ill use even of those general Descriptions, and never fail to apply them to the Devout of their Acquaintance. If this Reason ought to hinder one from speaking against false Devotion, one shou'd by the same Reason never speak against any lice; for there is not one of which an Appli-

ation may not be made.

Our Saviour has spoken against Hypocrisse, and there is scarce any Vice against which he has declar'd himself more: The Application which was made of the Eloquent and Lively Characters in which he represented Hypocrites,

did not hinder him from decrying them.

One passes for a Man of Prudence, when he says, that there are certain Vices which shou'd never be represented; to extend this precaution so far, as to desire that one shou'd never speak against sals Devotion, is to give ones self the Reputation of Prudence, at the Expence of our Neighbours's Benefit.

The truly Devout, profit by the Description of salse Devotion, the Wicked make an ill use of it; it is not just, that the Abuse of it by ill

Men

Men shou'd hinder the Benefit that the good Men may make of it; but some will say serious Men have disliked Tartuffe : I have already faid in another Place, that it was not the Character of a Hypocrite that render'd that Comedy dangerous, but the Representation of it on the Theatre, and the Circumstances in which the Author had plac'd Tartuffe.

The ill use that is made by Wicked Men of the Description of false Devotion, Injures only

those who make that ill use of it.

When I say to a vicious Man, that there are many Hypocrites, I fay no other thing to him, but that there are wicked Persons; what Injury does that do to the Good?

The Wicked rejoice to hear Hypocrites run down: This Joy can only be Founded on the

pleasure of having Conpanions.

If a Wicked Man, hearing Hypocrites spoken against, cou'd conclude, that himself not being a Hypocrite is a good Man, there wou'd perhaps be fome danger in describing Hypocrites; but where is the Man, who has fo little Sense as to draw this conclusion.

That which rejoices a Wicked Man (will fome fay) is, that the Description of Hypocrise makes him think that those who are propos'd to him, for Models are no better than himself: What ground for this Joy, unless one had propos'd Hypocrites to him for a Model?

But he imagines that there is Hypocrifie in those who are propos'd to his imitation as good Men. On what is this Imagination Founded, but on his own Malignity, and on the Rashness

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of his Judgment? What Proof has he, that one who is proposed to him as a good Man, is an Hypocrite? If he bounds his Application to such and such a one, against whom he pretends to have Proofs of Hypocrisie; those are not the Persons who are proposed to him for Models. He cannot abuse the Description of Hypocrisie, till he has Proofs that all those who pass for good Men are Hypocrites. And whilst there is one against whom he cannot have that Proof, he has no right to be excused from making a good use of the Description of Hypocrisie.

But 'tis (will some say again) a kind of Proof for him, to let him know that there are, or that there may be Hypocrites: This is as if one should say, that to know that there is or that there may be ill Generals, or corrupted Magistrates, is a Proof that Turenne was not a good General, nor

Cato a good Judge.

Let Men examine this Matter as much as they will, they can never find that the ill Use which may be made of the Description of salse Devotion, is sounded on any other Principles, than on the Malignity and little Sense of those who abuse it, or on the Desire, as I have said, which Men may have, that all the World were as bad as themselves.

Nevertheless it may be said with Reason, that the Malice which the World has against the Devout, is a little authorized by the Gonduct of some of them; and perhaps none contribute more to make the Devotes be discredited than themselves: But as the Malignity of those who judge ill of all the Devout, can only injure those

Who

who have that Malice, in the Judgment of all Men of Sense; so the Conduct of certain Devotes can only do hurt to themselves; the truly Devout are not the less what they are, and ought not less to be esteemed truly Devout.

The Injustice of the World with respect to Devotes, does not consist only in condemning the truly Devout on the Example of one falsly so; it goes so far as to acknowledge none for truly Devout, but those who are such as the World would have the Devout to be. The World which does not so much as know what Devotion is, takes upon it to be Judge and Arbitrator of the Devout. For my part, says a Man altogether Worldly, If I were a Devote, I would act in this and this manner. Would not one think in hearing him talk at this rate, that he has a perfect Idea of Devotion; and often he who speaks thus, has not so much as read the Gospel; he will give Rules to the Devout with an Understanding as Blind as his Heart is Corrupt.

The World carries the Idea of Devotion so high, only to reduce the Devout to the Impossibility of passing for Devout, and to authorize

it felt not to become fo.

Nothing is more fantaflick than the Idea which the World makes to it felf of Devotion; every one establishes it according to his own Taste: One says that the truly Devout ought to be perpetually in the Church or Hospitals; another says, that Devotion does not consist in that; and often the same Person who has said, that a devout Man ought to give all his Goods to the Poor, will say, when one shows him some who have

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Some judge of Devotion by their Interest, one who is in want of Mony, and who addrefles himself to a Devote to borrow it, will say if he is refus'd, that he who refuses him is not De-

Tho' the World cou'd agree on the Idea of Devotion, and if they should find a Man who answered that Idea, they would still say that this Man may not be Devout.

There is nothing which the World understands less than Virtue; they have no just Idea of it, they do not know it in those who practise it.

Virtue is as a Stranger to those who do not practife it, to judge well of true Devotion one must be Devout.

By this may be known too how false the Judgment is which the World passes upon the Devout. To hear the manner in which the World judges of them, one would think that to be Devout was to be Impeccable. The least Vice which Men perceive in a devout Man, makes them cry out that he is not Devour. They forget, that to be Devout is not to have no Vices, but to 13bour to correct those which one has.

All the World agrees that there is nothing more Impenetrable than the Heart of Man, but they forget this Truth when they are to judge another of the Devout. Tho' they should have Perfethat; tion enough never to commit the least Fault, that a Men would have Recourse to the Heart to judge to the ill of them; the Outlide (would they say) is ne who regulated, but the Heart is not. Be-

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Before one can have a right to judge ill of a Man, who has the appearance of a good Man, one shou'd be fure of having the Art to Pene. trate Hearts.

Those who judge ill of the Devout, are unreafonable; but there are fome more unreasonable than they, which are those who dare notigive themselves to Devotion, because they fear the Judgment that may be made of it.

He who in the Matter of Devotion, fears at Evil Judgment, is more to blame than he who

makes it.

Not to dare to declare for Devotion, because one fears the Judgments of Men; is not to fhel ter ones felf from their Judgments, 'tis to at thorife them.

Not daring to be Devout, because one feat to expose ones felf to the Censure of Men, is t shew that one does not place Virtue in the Heart. Let a devout Man be well perswader that true Devotion confifts in the Regulation the Heart, he will not fear the Judgment Men.

To begin by regulating the Heart, is not on ly having true Devotion, 'tis having found th art to secure it from the Judgment of Men the World judges of the Heart by the Outside the way to render that Judgment Unjust, is \$ have the Heart Regulated.

One wou'd more easily give themselves t Devotion, say some, if those who Exhort us things i it, wou'd limit it to the Regulation of the Hear as for that which discourages, is the Practice of De A M

votion which they of feribe to us.

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When those to whom these Holy Practices fem Vain or Inconvenient, shall have told us. hat they can have the Heart Regulated without hem, we shall not perhaps oblige such to pradife them.

fears at of Exactness in Little things, and in the Exterior Duties of Religion.

t to shell TE who neglects little things will neglect the great, I is an Oracle of Truth, but 'tis not equalone feat met in great things.

en, is to There wou'd be no difference between these in the wo Propositions, if all Christians apply'd themrewaded temselves chiefly to what there is of Solid in station to littue; the Love of solid Virtue inspires an Exment the thousand the state of the state neglect of them.

For want of applying ones self chiefly to So-ound the Virtue, one limits ones self to little things of Men without aspiring surther: But one does not in Outside the manner come to neglect little things with-just, is the ut neglecting great things. One may be Ex-th in little things without having the same exhere us to diness for greater: But the Negligence of little hort us to dings is a consequence of the Negligence one the Heart as for great things.

Le of De A Man may set himself to observe the Exteri-

Practices of Devotion without being Devour;

but a Man cannot be Devout in Neglecting the Exterior Practices of Devotion.

True Devotion includes the Exterior Practices, but the Exterior Practices do not include

true Devotion.

One must therefore distinguish well these two Propositions not to fall into the Error of those, who because one may be exact in little things. without being fo in great, think, one may also neglect them, without neglecting the great.

Defiring to be Devout without being exact in the Exterior Practices, is as if one wou'd be a great General in neglecting the Art of Fencing and that of Encampments, and of Fortificanons: And to flatter ones felf that one is Devout because one is exact in Exterior Practices, is as if one shou'd flatter himself with being a great General, because one knows how to Fence and Fortifie a Town.

He who is Exact in little things, blames him who Neglects them, and he who Neglects them who Neglects them, and he who Neglects them, from the blames him who is Exact in them; To make them Reason justly, and to render both Perfect to the in the Disposition wherein they are, each of them shou'd Reason as the other does; He who is Exact in little things, says, they are necessary to Virtue, and that is what he who Neglects them shou'd say: He who neglects them, says that them is 'tis not in such things that true Virtue confiss and this is what he who is Exact in them shou'd the feather. By this means one wou'd not neglect that who is Exact necessary the same says that the same says that the same says that the says Exactness, and the other would not limit him upon h felf to it.

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As different as these two Dispositions seem. they proceed however from the fame Principle: that is to fay, from an equal Ignorance in Virme, he who fays that Virtue has no need of the Practice of little things, understands it no better than he who limits it to that Practice.

But if between two Dispositions, both Evil, it were allow'd to decide which of them is the least Evil, I shou'd say it is that which limits it self to little things. This is not what the World hinks, it despises those who are Exact in little things: But I believe that those who Neglect them deferve yet more to be despis'd; He who Neglects little things, has commonly neither the little nor the great: But he who is Exact in intle things, has at least that little for his share.

He who neglects little things, is farther from alvation, than he who limits himself to Exactness in them. It is easier to pass from an Exactness in little things, to Exactness in great; than o make in great; and I cou'd more easily perswade him Persed to the Spirit of true Devotion, who practises all from the Negligence of little things, to Exactness the outward Duties of it, than him who observes He who none of them.

He who is Exact in those little things, is in he way of Devotion, but he who Neglects them is gone out of that way.

Nothing deters more from Devotion, than the fear of Trouble and Constraint; but he ex that who is Exact in little things, has already gain'd apon himself to Surmount one part of that Trouble and that Constraint; He is much more fit for ble and that Constraint: He is much more fit for As Devotion than the other; as a Man brought up

in a hardy manner, and who has inur'd himfelf to Labour, is more fit for the War, than one who has been tenderly Bred, and who is accuflom'd to a foft effeminate Life.

A Courtier who thinks to pleafe the King without ever appearing at Versailles, does not deceive himfelf more, than a Christian who thinks he can be Devout without any of the Practices

of Devotion.

One of the Principal Obstacles to Devotion is Pride; he who is Exact in little things, has already overcome a part of that Obstacle, and tho' he may have fome Pride, he has commonly less of it than one who neglects the Exterior Practices of Devotion: 'Tis Pride that makes him neglect them, but 'cis not Pride that makes the other Exact in them : That Exactness may give birth to Pride, but Pride never produces it and when the World would render those who have that Exactness contemptible, they never fay they are Proud and Haughty, they fay they are Simple People. Thus the World it fell shews, that there is less Vanity in being Exact to little things, than in Neglecting them.

That Simplicity which limits to the Exercise of Exterior Virtues, is less opposed to true Simplicity, than that Pride which despises them.

That which makes the necessity of being Humble to be Devout, is found in part already in him who is Exact to little things: Humility is requisite to Devotion, because one must submit to the Exercise of Virtues which seem of little importance; this is what he who practifes them has already. He already exercises those Religi

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Virtues which nourish Devotion, and it is easier to rectifie the use of them in those who pradife them, than to inspire them in those who

Devotion cannot be supported and preserved but by Vigilance: This Vigilance is not only a Care not to indulge ones felf in any thing, 'tis also a Care not to fail in any thing; 'tis to be faithful to all our Duties: He who is Exact in little things, may be faid to have already a Hahit of Faithfulness; 'tis so much done, and is for him a step which brings him nearer to Devotion than one who has a Habit of Negligence.

A Man who is Exact in little things, is, with respect to Devotion, what one who knows how to design and to mix the Colours is to Painting: There remains nothing more, but to teach him to dispose his Designs, and to place his Colours; or if you will, the Devotion of a Man Exact in little things, is like the Preparation of Fireworks all orderly dispos'd, to which nothing more is wanting but to fet Fire to it.

A Christian who neglects little things, may judge of his Error by the Irregularities whence that Negligence is produc'd, and by those which it may produce.

None boaft of having a more Noble Idea of God and of Religion, than those who Neglect little things; God does not require this (fay they) and Religion does not consist in such Trifles: Wou'd nust sub- not one think they had penetrated to the Botfeem of tom, both the Spirit of Religion, and the Inpractifes tentions of God? And yet none has less Studied es those Religion, and (if I dare use that Term) has lets

less Commerce with God than those Persons: For who is it that speaks thus, but such as are Ignorant both of God and Religion; neither of which can be known without the Practice of some of those little things which they despite: One must at least Read and Meditate to know God and Religion; but Meditation as well as Reading Spiritual Books, are of those things which by Persons at Court and in the World are called little things.

If we ever so little press those who say, that God and Religion do not require the Practice of little things, if we press them, I say, to tell us then what God and Religion do require; either they know not what to Answer, or they give us fuch an Idea of God and of Religion, as those Impious Philosophers give, who fix God in Heaven without any concernment for Men; or those fantastick Mysticks, become so samous in our Age, who establish for a Principle of their Ridiculous Sect, that God and Religion require nothing of us, but the Elevation of the

Heart by a simple Act of Faith. None has a more frivolous and a more unworthy Idea of God, and of Religion, that those who neglect little things; they think, or make others think of God, what a Courtier leating wou'd think, or give occasion to think of Prince, who shou'd say, that the Prince doe ins) d not concern himself to have any Court mad Fasts, a to him, or that any one in the Army shou's family keep his Post, or be Exact to all the Regulari me in ties of Military Discipline: One who shou's World speak thus, wou'd give me a strange Idea of this Prince. Prince.

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Tis (fay those who neglect little things) that we know God very well; 'tis rather, might one answer them, that you know him very ill.

To look on the Practice of little things as useless, is giving a great Blow to Religion, if

is not Destroying ic.

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I will not accuse all those who neglect little Observances, of being Libertines and Impious; I will accuse but some of them, at least of be-The others are either Proud or Fearful Christians; they Act in Appearance only on the Noble Ideas which they have form'd of God, but in reality they act only on the Haughy Ideas which they have form'd of themselves: They negle& little things, and the Exterior Practices of Devotion, because they are practised by the simple and common People: They have no good an Opinion of themselves to condekend to be Christians, like the Mean and Simple People.

You fay that you fet no Value on little things, because you know well what Religion is: You deceive your felf, you only Neglect them, beause you know well what the World is, you

ause you know well what the World is, you know that it does not agree with that Exaction, than these, and you fear to displease it.

A Christian who has taken a Habit of negocities and little things, is one who does always, what some Persons (otherwise good Christice does to made the Custom of having Prayers in their should be and the Custom of having Prayers in their should be a of this world on those Occasions, at the Expence of the Company which the in their House: These comply with the Q 3 the

Q 3

the Exercises of their Religion, and those others have taken a Habit of complying with it in the same manner on all sorts of Occasions: the one fear sometimes to appear Christians, and the o-

ther always fear it.

That Spirit which keeps a Christian from being exact in little Things, is the same Spirit which keeps a Monastick from the small Observances of his Order. What should we think of a Monastick, who, that he may not be reduced to ask Permissions, makes to himself a Prescription of Independence in his Monastery; who sets himself above the Discipline which is observed there; who dates not say to a Secular that amuses him, that the Ossice is going to begin, and that he ought to be present. We should judge that this Monastick is asham'd to appear such, and this is what a Christian commonly is, who neglects little Things; he is one who is assham'd to appear a Christian.

Let a Christian be without Pride or Humane Respects, he will be convinced of the Necessity of practising little Things, in being convinced of the Necessity of Religion; if in Reality he judges that Religion is necessary to him, he will judge that little Things are necessary to Religi-

on:

He who will limit himself to exercise his Religion only in great Things, will limit himself to

exercise it very rarely.

'Tis a handsome Means not to exercise ones Religion almost at all, to limit the Exercise of it to great Things; and perhaps it is that they may never do one good Action, that some Christians

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ife ones ife of it at they t fome pristians Christians have thought fit to make no account of little Things.

The first Christians were extreamly exact in the least Matters of Religion; but if one were to judge by the Thoughts of those whom I have been speaking of, the first Christians would have had more right to neglect little Things than we; they were every Day in the Occasions of per-

forming great ones.

Christians who neglect little Things, resemble a Man who frequenting none but rich
friends, and suffering none other to come to
him, should say that Friendship does not consist
in little Assiduities, but in helping our Friends
in their Poverty. As long as this Man accounts
none for his Friends but those who are rich; he
will never, whilst he acts on these Principles, give
marks of Friendship to any one: 'tis thus that
one may say there are many Christians, who
will never give any marks of Religion, whilst
they hold this for a Principle, to give none but
heroick Marks of it; they are no less careful to
hun heroick Actions, than they are negligent
of little ones.

Most Christians pass their Life in neglecting little Virtues, and avoiding great; they pass

their Life without Religion.

A Christian who neglects little Things, and reserves himself for performing great Ones, will do these no better than the other. 'Tis only by the Exercise of little Things that one learns to do what is Great; 'twas this which made the first Christians so exact in little Things; the more Occasions they had of doing great Things,

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the

the more they were persuaded that they ought not to neglect the lesser.

The Negligence of little Things draws on the Negligence of great Things; little Neglects cause the Great.

Who is it that are pleased with this Proposition, That Virtue does not consist in little Things?

Those who negled the Great.

In all forts of Affairs, there are little as well as great Things that belong to them: When a Man has a Law Suit of Consequence, he takes Care of the Great, but he does not negled the Little; in any Business of Consequence all that can contribute to make it succeed seems important.

People have this Prudence in their least Affairs, but they have it not in the Business of their Salvation; and if the term of little Things is only used when one speaks of what concerns our Salvation; 'tis perhaps because there is no Affair but that, in which People have suffered themselves to think there was any thing little.

If Men could persuade us that the little Things which they neglect, are effectively little Things, we should not perhaps be so much displeased with them for that neglect: But the Things which a Christian of this Character calls little, are to him of great Importance.

To resolve on neglecting little Things because they are little, is to contradict ones self; there is nothing so little but it becomes great when

one negleas it.

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One cannot decide what are the things that hou'd be call'd little, if one does not practife the great. A good Man, who has for many Years practis'd all the Christian Virtues, might perhaps tell us which are the little, and which are the great; but to Determine that without being a good Man, is to Determine what one knows nothing of.

The Good Man who alone cou'd have a right to Determine what is great and what is little in Religion, tells us that there is nothing little to a Christian.

He who determines that there are little things, proves by that determination, that he is neither a good Man nor a knowing Man.

Iknow not on what Authority worldly Persons determine, that there are things which belong to Religion of little consequence: They have not the Testimony of good Men to make them determine so, and they have no Experience of their own in it.

There is no Person more capable of informing us, that those which are call'd little things are not so, than a Christian who neglects them: If he consults his Life, he will see that the Irregularities of it, are only occasion'd by that Negligence. To have a Modest Deportment, to be punctual at Prayer, watchful over the Senses, strictly to observe the Fasts, banish Railleries, practise Mortifications, to be inviolably exact to the Time and Measure of the good Works one has prescrib'd to themselves, &c. These are what Persons of the World call little things in Religion; To forgive our Enemies, to be Chast, to be no Slanderer, to do no Injustice, to

love God with our whole Heart, to have a strong Faith, a profound Humility, a great Patience, to give Alms liberally, &c. These are what they call great things. Let them shew us one single Christian, who has all these great Virtues without having the others, and we will believe that

those may be neglected.

We know some (fay you) who have nothing to reproach themselves with as to all those great Virtues, and who are not more exact than others in the little. Such a one, is not he a good Man? Is not fuch a one a Virtuous Woman? And yet go to their House, you'll see nothing there but what you fee in all the Houses at Court : Ob ferve them in Company, they have no found Looks, no Ostentation, they laugh, they railly, they divert themselves as others do. Those who speak thus, endeavour to authorize their Negligence of little things by the Example of good Persons. They leave the Testimony which their own Conscience gives them of the contrary, to alledge doubtful Examples; Perfons who are fo much inclin'd to judge ill of their Neighbour, never judge well of him, but when they think to find fomewhat in his Example by which to authorize their own Irregularities.

If there are good Men, such as have been just now Represented, who appear no more Exact than others, it must needs be that they do so, only by another kind of Exactness; which is to conceal from the Eyes of the World out of Modesty and Humility, the Marks of that Exactness in little things, which they have in Private:

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vate: For it in telling us that these good Persons are not more Exact than others, they wou'd say that they are not more Modest, more Assiduous in Prayer, more religious Observers of other Christian Duties, than those who Neglect them; I shou'd conclude that they have not the great Virtues attributed to them, and I shou'd determine without Hesitation, such a one is not a good Man, such a one is not a good Woman.

It may sometimes be allowable for a good Man to hide his Exactness, but it is never allow-

able for him to fall off from it.

When worldly Persons, to shew that true Virtue does not consist in little things, cite us the Example of those who are Religious without Grimace, and without Ostentation; they tell us nothing more but that true Virtue does not consist in Ostentation and Grimace, and they authorize themselves at most, in not having that Exactness in little things, only by the Humility with which Pious Persons conceal and dissemble theirs. Is this reasonable?

The ill use which worldly Persons make of the Care that some good Men have to conceal their Exactness, shou'd teach the good to distrust it themselves: They ought to fear that what they believe an effect of their Modesty and their Humility, may be an effect of their Complaisance, and that worldly Persons accuse them of not being Exact in little things, only because

themselves fear to appear so.

A Diffimulation of Virtue is in certain Circumstances (but especially in those we are now speaking of) a real Vice.

What-

Whatever those good Persons are, who are supposed to be so little Exact, the Testimony drawn from their Example, is always doubtful; but those who neglect little things, have one which is not so, that is, the Testimony of their own Conscience: Let them tell us sincerely, is, having neither a Modest Deportment, Assiduity in Prayer, or Exactness to any Exterior Duties of Religion, they are yet Chaste, Charitable, Just, sull of Faith and of Humility, let them stand to what they think of it themselves.

To be Negligent of little things, is opening the way to Sin, and shutting it to Repentance.

He who Neglects little things, and who looks on that Negligence as a thing indifferent in Religion, shou'd, if he has Reason, make us believe one of two things; either that he is not a Sinner, or if he has Sinn'd, that he did it with a full Knowledge of the Sin, and Intention to commit it; he cannot make us believe the first, and he wou'd not have us think the second.

Whatever Sin or Habit of Sin he is in, he must be sensible that he had not been Engag'd in it, if he had not neglected the beginnings. A Lewd Person, is such only because he neglected to constrain himself, and that he sought certain Company and Conversations. To delight in Company and Conversation, and to restrain the Senses, are however, according to him, little things.

You are Covetous, Unjust, a Slanderer, & a did you intend to be a Slanderer, Unjust, or Covetous, when you gave your self up to those shameful Vices? No, you will say, if you are

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Sincere, we only thought of minding our own Interefts: Taking care of one's Interests, is no great Evil if we will believe the Sinner.

To know the manner in which Sin is produc'd and form'd, is to know the Importance

of little things.

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6. 4. We wou'd fain Repent throughly and for sake our Sins, say sometimes Persons of the World. What shou'd be answer'd them? Let them begin by Praying to God, frequenting the World less, doing good Works; all these, if we will believe them, are little things; but without these little things they talk in vain of Repenting and leaving their Sins.

§. 5. If a Christian who professes to make no Account of little things, is not Impious, he will find in reflecting on his Life, that there has been a Time in which he thought he ought not to despise them; 'tis enough, for Example, that he has fometimes made his Preparation for Communicating at Easter; if he has perform'd this Action Devoutly, how many must he have done of those little things which he Neglects.

Why shou'd one make no account at one time of that which one makes great account of at another? Why shou'd one say in the Carnival, that certain good Actions are infignificant, when

they ought to be done at Easter.

If a Christian who neglects little things, hopes to Die Piously, he will practife at least at his Death some of these things which he now calls little; he will be depriv'd of the Company and the Pleasures of the World; nothing will be talk'd of to him but Prayers and good Works; perhaps he may then be so sensible of the Im-

portance

portance of little things, as to order the Practice of fome of them in his Will: Perhaps by a just Punishment of his Negligence, he may only be fensible of their Importance, when it is not in his Power to put them in Practice, but by others.

That which wou'd be a Holy and Ufeful Practice during Life, is often nothing but Super-

stition at Death.

When the Heart has been in disorder all ones Life, for want of Exactness to little things; that Exactness will serve but little to regulate it at Death.

§. 6. Little things are only Useful fo far as they ferve to regulate the Heart, all the Exterior Practices of Religion are of no worth, but for far as the Heart shares and animates them.

Little things are not recommended for their own fakes, but for the regulation of their Heart, and when I perswade a Chistian to enter into a Religious Society, he does not follow my Counfel, if he contents himfelf with having his Name

fet down in the Books of that Society.

Most of those who are appointed for the Education or the Instruction of their Neighbour, feem to limit their Precepts to the Regulation of the Outfide: What is taught to Young People with fo much care, as Submission to the Laws of an Exterior Discipline, being punctual at the found of a Bell, to keep Silence, to regulate their Gate, and their Looks; 'tis on fuch things a Master Exhausts all his Application: portmen Having look'd afide, and having spoke contrary to Charity, are Faults which they fet on the in fine (fame

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fame Foot, and to which they destine the same Punishments: A Master or a Father is no less angry at his Disciple or his Son for an ill Air, than an ill Action.

It wou'd be much furer to endeavour the Regulation of the Exterior by that of the Heart, than to endeavour the Regulation of the Heart by that of the Exterior, but one is much more difficult than the other; there are fewer Mafters capable of teaching Virtue than there are capable of teaching Affection. Besides, as a Master seeks the Reputation of a quick Instruction, and an apparent Advancement, he has fooner done by Regulating the Exterior; but fthey ftop there, the Disciple or the Penitent will have only that Conftraint, or perhaps even difgust of that Constraint which they have inhird him with: We commonly see that the Child brought up in that manner, becomes eiher a Fool or a Libertine, or that the Devotes who have Directors of this Character are only Superstitionsly Devout, or of an irregular Life.

Those whose Exterior one attempts to reguhe without Regulating their Heart, are like Torrents; the more we oppose them, the more Impetuous they grow: A Devote who has only been form'd to Constraint, is often so much the

readier to give her felf up to Evil.

I enter a Place destin'd to form Young People to Virtue, I fee written on the Walls with great care, all the particulars of a Modest Deation: portment, and all the Precepts of that Discintrary pline which they are made to have drawn out n the in fine Characters; I am Edify'd with it : But I am

affectation

I am Edify'd only because I suppose that the But if Mafter leaving to the Walls the care of the Out hut, I fide referves particularly to himfelf the Regulation of the Mind and of the Heart

You fay that fuch a Man is a Saint, that he is an Example to all the Community , I believe right to of his Sanctity? He is, fay you, the first at every others thing, and these thirty Years he has exempted Tables, himself from nothing: That is good; but to make because me think him as much a Saint as you say, ad there, that he is Patient, Humble, that he never ap Temper pears in the World which he has renounc'd; that Tables. he meddles with nothing but what concern How himself, that he Censures no body, that he has she of never no part in Divisions but that of Reconciling without them, that he takes what is given him without taxing his Superiors, either with Pride or Ava good Acrice, and that he is as well content with Obscur toaches ty as with Splendor, he desires no Office, and Avarice has no Law Suits: With these Virtues and those you praise in him, I shall think him. God by Saint indeed.

I take it Patiently, when a Nun makes me had three hours at the Grate, whilst she seek way to do her Superior, whose Permission she should have the other before she speaks to me: But I should be very 'Tis a Impatient, if I thought her Conversation would not be as Holy as that of a Person so Exact to more of the smallest Observances, ought to be. I praise Those

the smallest Observances, ought to be. I praise Those all the Circumspection which a Carmeline or sall the Nun of the Visitation keeps in not opening the but they Grate, or not listing her Vail, because I find he in the Mindentirely sull of God when she speaks to me where did not be in the But they have the sall the sall the mindentirely sull of God when she speaks to me where did not be in the But they have the sall the s

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at the But if through a Vail pull'd down, or a Grate Out hut, I shou'd hear her Rail or Repine, I shou'd Regu make no account of the Vail, and the Grate.

There are Christians, who by the exact Obhat he fervation of a small thing, think they have some chert fight to Neglect a great one. We know more than one Devote, who Eating every Day at every others Houses, and being always at the Best mpter Tables, think People shou'd be Edisy'd by it, make because they affect to Eat what is least Delicate by, and there. A strange way this of signalizing one's remaining about to all the Good d; the Tables.

heha of never having pass'd one Day of their Life neiling without hearing Mass, nor any great Holidays without Confessing, and who think by these re Ava good Actions to shelter themselves from the Re-

de Ava good Actions to shelter themselves from the Reblomi toaches which their Uncharitableness and their
te, an arrive deserve.

The Number of those who think to deceive
thim sod by this Affectation, is small; there are
more of those who seek by this to deceive Men:
the Number of those who endeavour this
the seek way to deceive themselves, is greater than both
the others.

This a folly to esteem those things insignificant
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One wou'd think that some Christians wou'd make a kind of Compensation with God; they give him certain little things, that they may have a right to Indulge themselves in something great. er. Igo to Plays, (faid a Lady some time ago) but so many Plays as I see, so many Masses I make to be said. We every Day hear Players by Profession boast, that they never Act but they give a part of their Gains to the Poor. 'Tis happy too if they do not find Directors who approve of this profane and strange Compensation. There are others, who by little things, think themselves Dispens'd from doing great, let us have the Ark brought into the Camp, faid the Ifrael. ites, and it will Defend us against our Enemies. Let us enter our selves into such a Society, say Chriflians, and it will fecure us from the Punish. ment of Sin.

'Tis not knowing the first Principles of Religion, to perswade our selves that any Practice of Devotion how Holy soever it be, can Dispense us from Repentance; since that Practice has no Value or Efficacy but so far as it is join'd

with Repentance.

A Divine who is to Preach to a Religious Society, knows not often what to take for the Subject of his Sermon: Here is a Subject ready found, the Necessity of Repentance. There is no time in which one is more oblig'd to Preach to Christians the Necessity of Repentance, than at such Devotions; and the Preacher who thinks he shou'd not Preach Repentance on the Festival of a Religious Society, is not less mistaken than the Members of it, who think that being

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Great the Sn of a Cl other ? fcribes Little. of the Society will Dispense them from Repentance.

Societies, and other the like Devotions, are in Christianity, only Baits (as one may fay) to Repentance : We engage Christians in them. to put them by that Engagement on the Practice of those Virtues they have need of, and there is none more necessary for them than Repentance.

One obtains by these Devotions divers Graces: I agree to that, but the Graces of Faith and of Repentance, are the first that should be asked, in entering on those Devotions; the other Graces are not given till after these.

Small Virtues are infignificant without the Great; Great Virtues are impossible without the Small: What ought then to be the Conduct of a Christian, with Respect to the one and the other? That which our Saviour himself prefribes; to do the Great, and not to neglect the Little. These ought you to have done, and not to leave the others undone.

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HIS Virtue is, according to the Testimony of all the Fathers who have spoken of it, the most difficult Virtue to preferve; and tis treated in the World as if it cost almost nothing; to fee the Life of most Christians, one must conclude, either that being Chafte, is an easie

Matter, or that scarce any one is so.

If in reality there needs no more precaution to preserve this Virtue, than is taken in the World, it is certain, that it may be very easily preferv'd: But if it is as difficult as is tald, 'tis certain that no more Precautions being taken than is usual in the World, there are few who have this Virtue: One of these two Consequences is Infallible; and I know not whether any one can fay, that it is not the laft.

The greater part of Women who frequent the World, not only do nothing to acquire, or to preferve this Virtue; but they do every thing that may destroy it, and yet they all pretend to be Virtuous Women: One wou'd think in hearing them, that they cou'd not be even suspected

of the contrary.

When one hears a Woman of the World advance as an incontestable Truth, that as for her, the knows not what Love is, that the has never either permitted or felt it: Wou'd not one think that this is a Saint who lies on the Ground, who passes her Life in Retirement, and in Contemplation!

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plation? In the mean time the is a Woman al together of the World, who rifes at Noon, and passes her whole Life at the Plays, the Opera's, in the Walks, in Gaming, and who has no greater Business than Dressing her self. who live in this manner have no right to fay, that they know nothing of Love, or at least they have no right to be believ'd in it upon their faying to. House thes artists

If it were ever allowable for a Christian to judge on Appearances, one might judge that a Woman who lives entirely after the way of the World, is not too Honest. This Judgment is perhaps the least rash of all rash Judgments.

If Plays and Romances, if frequenting the World teaches Chaftity, how needlesly has the difficulty of being Chafte been infifted on; and our Saviour has yet more needlesly faid that we must Watch, Pray, pluck out an Eye, and mortifie our selves to preserve the Heart in Purity.

To fay that a Woman who lives entirely after this manner, may be an Honest Woman, is to think they are speaking to Persons of another World, who know neither the Heart of Man,

nor our Religion.

I cannot imagine why a Woman who shews no Piety or Religion in her Manners, who loves Plays and Diversions, and whose Life is entirely fenfual, shou'd be offended that a Man dares to Love her, and to make a Declaration of it to her; can one think her an Enemy to Love. when one fees her Delighted with all that gives Birth to it? Who will imagine (whilft she runs with so much eagerness to tender passionate TOURIG Plays)

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who ntemtion? Plays) that the Passion of which the Representation pleases her so much, is a Passion that she detests, or that she is ignorant of; and that she who laments (for Example) the Unhappiness of Pyrrbus rejected by Andromache, will make others Experience those Repulses which have so much mov'd her Pity. Oridi (binak 14)

When a Woman of this Character repulses a Man who Loves her, what can he think of her? If he has Senfe, he will conclude the rejects him

only out of Caprice or Aversion. It is said a

The Women of the World would make their Haughtiness be esteem'd: They shou'd live then in fuch a manner as may perswade Men that

Haughtiness is a Virtue in them.

The proudest Women often lose all the Value and all the Glory of their Haughtiness: Men will not be perswaded, that Haughtiness is a Virtue in them, when they have no other but that.

Let a Woman pass for a truly Virtuous and Pious Woman, few will dare to be Amorous of her, and less to declare it to her. Men esteem even the Denials of a Woman, when they know that Piety and Virtue are the Causes of them.

We shou'd rarely see Love turn'd to Hatred, if only Virtuous Women were belov'd; that which makes it so difficult for Men to Pardon Women's Disdain, is the little Idea they have of their Virtue.

A Woman repulsing a Man who lov'd her, Vow'd that she knew not what it was to Love: He to whome the spoke, had a Letter of Gallantry antry this M

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times manne lantry in his Pocket which she writ to another ; this Man became her Enemy.

There is but one way for Women not to make Enomies of those who will be their Lovers,

that is to be truly Virtuous, and Pious.

Most of those Women who follow the way of the World, think they aspire to the Virtue which makes Honest Women, when they only seek the Reputation of it: They never temember the first, till the other begins to be attack'd. make some of them perceive an Evil, the World must have perceiv'd it before-hand; they remain calmly in it, whilst the World is pleas'd to let them be undisturb'd.

At the beginning of a Passion, Women abandon themselves to it; after some time, they give themselves with more referve to it; 'tisperhaps the Inconstancy of the Heart which abates its Eagerness, but 'tis oftner the love of Repu-

tation.

God and Religion are in few Women the Motive of their Virtue, and the World, if I dare fay fo, makes more Honest Women than the Gospel: But the Virtue which the World

inspires is not true Virtue.

If the World were pleas'd to fet Slandering and Gallantries on the same foot, there would be as many Gallant Women as there are, who are given to Slander. God has equally forbidden those two Vices, but the World does not condemn them equally, Slander is tolerated, and often applauded in it; Gallantry is fometimes tolerated, but never applauded: The manner in which the World judges of these lanuv.

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more than the other. There are few Virtuous with Women in the Sight of God. Journ of SIE . W

There is no scruple made in these Matters, of C of any thing but what exposes the Reputation; in V count of, provided they can fay there is nothing the dishonourable in it.

Women think they can give the Heart and ftop tue, there; but giving the Heart, is passing a kind of Nice

Obligation to do more.

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'Tis not the fear of losing their Reputation with the World only, that deprives Ladies of to the Merit of their Virtue, but the fear of losing felf. it even with those by whom they are belov'd: They rarely fay, I wou'd not that God should who Reproach me with this Weakness, they say, I gior wou'd not put it in the Power of a Man to re- alm proach me with it.

The Pride of worldly Ladies has yet another De-licacy in this Matter; they wou'd not have such they a Weakness to Reproach themselves with; not for the desire they have to do their Duty, but Per for fear of losing fomething of that Idea which are their Vanity gives them of themselves

A Woman who is Honest only on these Motives, is not an Honest Woman. TadT

To be nice in ones Reputation, is not a right Re Motive to Virtue; 'ris at most a Motive capable of making us take the Means to become Virtue find tuous; you shou'd be prais'd for being careful of the the Reputation of Virtue, only so far as you are careful of Virtue it self: Those Women who cape neglect the Reputation of being Virtuous, are all if the nomenages for a oftner and louder

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ear'd more despicable than others; but those who tuous without being Virtuous, have the Reputation of it, are to much the more Citable that is difficult tters, of God, that they do almost all that is difficult tion; in Virtue, and yet have not the Merit of it. It it, are so much the more Criminal in the Sight thing the Reputation of Virtue.

When one is nice on the Reputation of Vird flop crue, there is but one way to fatisfie all ones ind of Niceness in that, which is to be truly Virtuous.

tation To fay that one is nice on Reputation, and lies of to have an Intrigue, is to contradict ones lofing felf.

hou'd: Nothing can more condemn those Women should who are not Virtuous, on a Principle of Relifay, I gion, than to fee them do, on other Principles, to re- almost all that Religion requires of them to be Virtuous; If they wou'd do for the Love of herDe-God, what they do for Glory or for Vanity, e such they wou'd be Virtuous Women.

h; not The Rules which the World prescribes to Persons who wou'd preserve their Reputation, which are the same as those which Religion prescribes to preserve our Purity; that is, to avoid Love, see Mo-

The Persons who are most tender of their Reputation, are sometimes those who are the least so of their Virtue; and perhaps if one aim'd since virtue, one wou'd be less nice on the point of Reputation.

You are the point of their Virtue; and perhaps if one aim'd since on the point of Reputation.

You are the point of Reputation.

You are the point of their Virtue; and perhaps if one aim'd since on the point of Reputation.

You are the point of Reputation.

more Virtuous, fay it oftner and louder. Per-

Perhaps there are worldly Women who speak fincerely, when they say they are Strangers to Love; but if they shou'd say, it was on the account of Virtue, they wou'd not speak sincerely. The Inconstancy and Levity of their Minds, or the Excess of their Vanity, and their Selflove, are the fole Causes of their having no Intrigues.

To fay that a worldly Woman expos'd to all that gives Birth to Love, has never lov'd, is no Commendation of her Virtue; 'tis commonly a fign of an odd Fantastick Nature. There is no Constitution happy enough to refift continual Occasions, and the first Character of true

Chaffity is to avoid all Occasions.

There are some Women who make it a Merit in them to have broke off an Intrigue, which they have only broke out of Inconstancy or Levity; the Perfidioufness and Inconstancy of worldly Women, make as many Sacrifices of this kind, as the Virtue of Pious Women.

Those Women who have a light and inconftant Heart, have but one way to fave the Shame of their Levity and Inconstancy, which is to become Religious: They are in the wrong not to make that good use of the Facility they have to break off their Intrigues, and to change; but there are rarely any light and inconffant Women, who are not thus in the wrong; those who most desire Intrigues, are commonly those whoseHumouris least capable of continuing them,

There is but one fole Motive capable of inspiring a true Chastity, which is the Love or

the Fear of God. The World lo

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Those Women are pitied whom their Interest engages in an Intrigue, and those are yet more pitied who have Intrigues contrary to their Interest or to their Reputation: The first are pitied as we pity those who are Blind; the others as we pity those who are Mad. Neither of them are of more worth than the other, in the Sight of God.

A regard to the World keeps up as many Intrigues as it breaks; there are as many Women who persist in an Amour, because it has made a Noise, as there are who put an end to it for that Reason. To break off an Intrigue which the World talks of, is not, in the Opinion of all Women, the only means to Silence it; there are as many who think to set themselves above the Censure of the World, by continuing the Scandal as by removing it: When they are not able to Silence the World, they flatter themselves that Men will not be able to talk always, they hope to tire out their Censures when they will neither fear nor avoid them.

When the World talks of an Intrigue, the Intrigue (how long foever it may last) will sooner end than the talk of the World; and they are much deceived, who think to satigue Censoriousness: This Vice has more Obstinacy than the most obstinate Amour; Men often talk before the Intrigue begins, and they continue to talk after it is at an end.

She who takes the World for the Rule of her Conduct in this Matter, will never have any worth in the Sight of God, and will rarely have any in the Opinion of the World: There is but one

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fure Rule of true Chaftity, which is the Law and the Will of God in the arom bas nommos

If there are any worldly Women, who make a scruple of receiving Love, there are few who scruple to give it : Being a Vittuous Woman, in the Language of the World, is having no Intrigue. This Virtue is not carried fo far as not to have any Lover. There is little difference in the Sight of God betwixt Loving, and fuffering ones felf to be Loved: Most Women are Accesfaries even to that Love which they reject.

There are some who seem to make no scruple of any thing in this Matter but the Terms: Every Lover may be hearken'd to and allow'd, provided he gives his Passion the Name of a tender Friendship. A certain Woman affirm'd, that there was no harm in some Gallant Letters which she receiv'd, because he that writ them, put only the first Letters of the words Love, and Paffion: And I know another to whom the most licentious Letters seem'd decent when they were written in Ciphers. There is no Paffion fo ridiculously Blind as that of Love. Had said

There are Women with whom one always fees the same Man; we find him at home with them at all Hours of the Day, Tis, fay they, a Man of no consequence, what do they mean by this? Is he a Friend? No; if he was barely a Friend, wou'd he have so much Assiduity and attend to constantly; is he a Lover ? Oh no, a Lover wou'd not be suffer'd, what is he then? I wou'd fain have them give me a definition dangerous than another it he is though mid to

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Every one allows that there is nothing more common and more easie, than for a Woman and a Man to conceive a Passion for each other; and yet by the manner of Women's suffering, what they call a Man without consequence, one would think they were perswaded, that this Passion was the newest and most extraordinary thing in the World: A Woman will have a Friend of this Character, be Tender, Nice, Assiduous, and even a little Jealous; but yet she does not think he can be a Lover. She deceives her self: A Friend to whom a Woman reproaches his want of ardour, is generally something more than a Friend.

There is no Man, whom a Christian Lady

can truly call a Man of no confequence.

Such a one, said a Lady some time ago, speaking of one of her Friends, is just what I will have him be, he wou'd have been my Lover, but he is contented to be my Friend: Wou'd not one think that a Woman who speaks in this manner had an absolute Power over Hearts, and that the Passion of Love was the most Governable of all the Passions.

A Friend who wou'd be a Lover, and who fays he is contented to be a Friend, is not Sincere; or if he does not design to deceive, he must be deceived himself.

There are perhaps no Friends who are of more confequence, than those who are stilled Persons of no consequence.

A Friend who has that Character, is more dangerous than another, if he is thought to be of no consequence.

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A Woman who calls an Affiduous Friend, a Man without consequence; endeavours to make others think that of him which she does not think her felf.

A Man without Consequence is at the most, one who is not belov'd: "Tis not a Man who does not Love, and yet less one who may not be Loved.

That which makes a Friend be called a Man without Consequence, is neither his Virtue, nor his want of Friendship. What is it then?

There is no Friend who wou'd endure to pass for a Man without Confequence, if he thought

himfelf fuch.

To fay, that a Friend is a Man without Confe. quence, is not having taken precautions against Confequences; 'tis on the contrary giving ones felf a privilege of not taking any precautions a-

gainst them.

Most Women are Blind, as to the Nature of the Inclination Men have for them; fome will always perswade themselves a Man Loves them. others will never believe it. I know not which is better in the Sight of God, either to think that he who is only a Friend, is in Love; or that he who is in Love, means nothing but Friendship.

Tho' it shou'd be true, that this Assiduous Friend is engag'd to you only by Friendship, wou'd you not have Reason to tear that his Affilduity might one Day engage him by less Inno-ALLIC A

cent Ties.

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She who wou'd not suffer a Man as a Lover, ought not to fuffer so much Affiduity;

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We are not allow'd then to have any Man for our Friend, will the Women of the World fay, I don't know that; but I very well know that 'tis not allowable for you to have any Lovers.

But there are Friends who are not Lovers, and who never will be so; When you have prov'd that to me, I shall answer you, that you may be allowed to have Friends; but the proof is very difficult.

This is giving Occasion, will they say again, to condemn all those Women who have Men Friends, and to judge ill of them. I answer, that it is not giving Occasion to judge ill of the Friendship between a Man and a Woman; but 'tis giving Reason to sear it: 'Tis not my part nor any ones else to judge of what does happen, but 'tis my part, since I write on this Subject, to judge of what may happen, and to tell you of it.

There is no pretext so Holy, for a Man's engaging in a strict Friendship for a Woman, which has not been abus'd, and which is not every Day abus'd; there is therefore none that ought not to be fear'd. I am to blame to be Scandaliz'd at a Man and a Woman's being Eternally alone together, but they are to blame for giving me this Occasion of Scandal.

There are two forts of People, whose Sentiments and Discourses on this Matter are very Opposite; the one lament when they see Men perpetually frequenting Women, and the other complain of the Lamentations of the first: They say the first are Simple and Weak, but I believe the others are more so.

Those

Those who say there is no harm in being continually with a Woman, can neither prove it by Reason nor by Experience.

That Lady, who when some wou'd have perswaded her to take a Man for her Counsellor, answered, That she was too Old to have a Lover,

was no Coquet; but she was a Woman.

Ask a Woman of the World, if she designs to gain Lovers by the Care she takes of her Beauty? she will tell you no; what does she design then? Tho' her intention shou'd be Innocent; she has Reason to fear raising ill ones in those who observe the Pains she takes to please.

Some time ago an Accident happen'd to a Lady of the Court, which a little disfigur'd her Face; she was excessively griev'd at it, and she said to every Body, that she wou'd have given all her Fortune not to have had that little Deformity. She spoke this in the first Transports of her Concern, but if she had spoken in cool Blood, what cou'd one have thought else, but that she had some great Interest to appear Handsome, that shou'd make her Buy it so dear? Can such an Interest be allowable in a Christian Lady?

By little Accidents which happen to diminish Beauty, one discovers the Insincerity of Ladies, who boast of setting no Value upon being Handsome; and by their Fondness of their Beauty,

one often discovers their want of Virtue.

There is no Innocence in being Delighted with ones felf, when there is Evil in pleasing others.

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6. I. A Mother wou'd not allow her Daughter to write a Letter, or hearken to a Lover he teaches her both, in suffering her to read Romances, and in carrying her to Plays: She is violently angry with her, when she perceives the least disposition in her to Gallantry, she ought then to Breed her otherwise; has she Reaion to find Fault with her for going on in the way wherein the has fet her?

Teaching nothing to Young Women with more Care than to Drefs, and to Please; is not that teaching them to make themselves be Beloved? Learning to make themselves be lov'd, slearning to Love. To have a right of blaming Vice in ones Children, one must have shewn hem the Example, and have given them In-

fructions of Virtue.

Most Mothers bring up their Daughters as if hey design'd them to be Curtezans, and yet they spect them to be Saints: One fide or t'other nuft be fix'd on, if you defire your Daughters lou'd have a Prudent Conduct, teach them in ood time to avoid the Vanities of the World: you wou'd have them frequent the World, ont blame them for their ill Conduct.

A Daughter who fees her Mother still Fond her Old Days of a Beauty which she only atches up by Art, can she be without Fondness

or her own?

Young Women laugh at the Old ones, who on'd be Handsome; they forget that old Ladies ave this Weakness, only because they had it in heir Youth; they ought not to laugh at a Hait which they have taken themselves, and which

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they Fortifie every Day. Being Foolish when one is Old, is a proof that one has not been over-wife in ones Youth. An old Lady, who is fond of being Handsome, differs from a Young one, who has the fame Vanity, only by being Ridiculous; One is as guilty as the other, and the Young one is yet the more to blame, fince the is of an Age in which the Habit not being form'd, is easier to vanquish.

Nothing better shews the Folly of a Young Person, who only minds her Beauty, than the Ridiculonfness of an Old one, who likewish

thinks of nothing but hers.

An old Lady retains the Deckings and Orna ments of Beauty, as an old Soldier keeps by him those Arms which ferv'd him in his first Campaigns: When they are curious of the one of the other, it may be concluded, that they have still in their Heads, the Ideas of War, or b Love:

If I were ask'd why certain old Ladies are f careful to be finely Drefs'd, I might answer that 'tis because they look on those Ornament as the last Reserves lest them by which to in

fpire Love.

We can never prefume that a Woman throughly Converted, when we fee her still cul tivating with care, that Beauty or those Orna ments which have been Occasions of her Guilt mes Id she is not truly chang'd till we see her have n concern that way.

I doubt whether Vanity be the only cause of the they that unwillingness Women have to own the seas it Age, if they consulted Vanity alone, they wou'd lorality for the season of the sea

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perhaps find wherewith to gratifie it by owning an Age for which we naturally have a Respect and Veneration; it must needs be then, that when they wou'd not be thought to draw near an Age capable of inspiring Respect and Veneration, it is because they wou'd be thought still of an Age capable to inspire something else, and I know not if another Vice than Vanity has no hare in this Sentiment.

How nice foever People are in the Commerce of the World to shun all Appearances of the Vice contrary to Purity, there are no Appearances which are more establish'd in the World. than those of that Vice; and perhaps no Chrihan Virtue is worse treated by Custom, than

that of Purity.

Does any one imagine that the manner of Womens Dreffing themselves, that the Affiduiies which Men have for them, the foft things hey continually say to them, and a thousand other Customs have any ill in them? This is so answer little believ'd, that I doubt not what I say of nament it here will be thought too severe and overto in frain'd.

oman is S. 2. Romances (fuch as we have seen them in the fill cut have feduce the Heart; they serve to employ they seem the Heart; they ferve to employ they seem they seem they produce all the ill Effects full full eness; they propose Virtue, but they leave they need to the fill eness; they propose Virtue, but they leave they make they sive it they give the Lie to History. ause of the they give it much more to the Gospel; they in the teas it were a Sanctuary in which the Passions wou' ind a refuge against the Austerity of Christian perhap locality, and if they do not inspire an Aversion

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to Purity, they at least inspire an Aversion to all that must be done in order to aquire it.

What is the Character of an Heroine in a Romance? She is a Person of so nice a Chastity as not to fuffer even the Shadow of the contrary Vice. How has fuch a Heroine arrived to this height of Virtue? By the fole Strength of her Reason, so secure of her self, that she is but the more Virtuous when she Loves and is Beloved.

She who finds in Romances a Chastity that requires fo little Precaution, will not care to fludy it in the Gospel, where it seems so difficult and fo painful; and whilft she flatters her self that the may be Chafte in the height of Paffion, the will make no scruple of indulging it.

To depend on the Virtue of a Woman, who has learn'd that Virtue only in Romances, is to depend on a Phantome and a Chimera; Romances propose Chimerical Virtues, and they inspire none but what is fuch.

I have faid elsewhere, that tho' Romances re- having present a great Virtue, with a strong Passion, lege Virtue will never be learn'd in them; the Rea-Roman fon of this is clear, which is, that Virtue is only The acquir'd by flying Occasions, by Mortification Curio and by Prayer, and these are not the Virtue is indi which Romances teach.

People are more affected with the Love that The with the Virtue that reigns in Romances; because Dange they do not find in them that which produce We Virtue, and that we have in our selves, that a viole which causes Love.

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Having a relish for Romances, is having a defire to relish Love.

A Woman who delights in reading Romances, and who spends her time in it, is already not over Virtuous in the Sight of God, and exposes her self not to be so at all in the Sight of Men.

I wou'd not say, that all who have writ Romances or Plays have had corrupted Hearts: But I believe I may say, that the Regularity and the Purity of their Hearts have been in great Danger, and that the Loss of their Time is not the chief thing which they will have to account for.

It is difficult not to be a little pleas'd with Love, when one knows how to represent it so agreeable as it is in Romances and Plays.

who writes the History of an Amour, he canis to not but know that these fort of Books may, contrary to his Intention, corrupt Innocence and
inspire Purity.

If I were required to give a proof of Womens less rehaving but little Virtue in our Age, I might alaffion, lege the Passion they have had for Plays and Rea-Romances.

They read Romances, and go to Plays out of cation. Curiofity, or for an Amusement; but she who Virtue is indifferent at the first Act, or the first Volume, is not always so at the last.

e that The more Tender a Piece is, the more it is because Dangerous.

coduce We are mov'd at the Sight or at the Recital of s, that a violent Passion, only because we find in it a Copy of our own Heart; the Sensibility we have

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have for the Weakneffes of the Lovers that are represented, is a secret applause which we give to our own Weakneffes; the Author may blame their Paffion as much as he pleases, we excuse it in fpight of the Author; and at the recital of an Unfortunate Love, 'tis only the Misfortune which we think of fecuring our felves from.

In Reading the Adventures of a Heroine, who is represented to us with a great Virtue join'd with a violent Passion, we take the part of her Paffion against her Virtue; we only admire her Virtue at the most, but we love her Passion; we admire her Virtue as a thing above us, we love her Paffion as a thing that fuits us; the one feems to us impracticable, we feel our felves capable of the other: One does not commonly attempt to imitate any thing in Examples but what one finds ones felf capable of performing.

To think that the Example of a Heroine in 2 Romance, will inspire the Love of Virtue is an Error, and to think that one may as well profit by her Example as by that of those Saints which are propos'd to us, is yet a greater Error.

If the Example of a Christian Heroine who fubdu'd her Passions, may profit those who read it, 'tis not because she has vanquish'd her Passions, 'tis because her Example teaches us the Means by which the overcame them; 'tis not because we find her Pure and Chaste, that her Example is Profitable to us, 'tis because we find her Mortified, Penitent, and truly Christian. Pro.

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Proposing the Example of a Virtue without teaching the means to imitate it, is not proposing an Example.

Plays inspire the same Passions as Romances do, but Romances inspire them more slowly, the Evil makes a quicker and a more lively Impression

from Plays.

The little Idea we have of the Virtue of an Actor or an Actress, takes off the Force of the Precepts and Examples of that Part they represent.

People do not profit at a Play, because they

feek nothing but Pleafure there.

We hear Instructions of Virtue at the Plays, but we see Examples of Vice there; the Eye acts with more quickness than the Ear. Whatever Profit one may aim at receiving from Plays, one finds a Poison in them which seizes the Heart, before the Virtue represented there can have Acted on it.

Plays which are indifferent in themselves to Good or Evil, are determin'd to Evil by those

things with which they are accompanied.

Those who have written Religious Tragedies, have I believe had good Intentions; but they did not consider the Respect which is due to Religion, nor that which we ought to have for the Confessors of Jesus Christ, when they made a Player represent the Personage of a Martyr.

One Proof, that the Theatre is not a Place where the Majesty of our Religion shou'd be expos'd, is, that in the Play call'd Polyeutte for example, People are less mov'd by the Martyr

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who dies for Jesus Christ, than by the Lover who Sacrifices himfelt for his Miffres: They interes themselves much more for Severus than for Polyente; tis because one is in his Place, and the other is not.

Tis known that the Author of that Tragedy had Religion, and that he did not Compose it but at the defire of some Persons who had a great deal; but if an Enemy of Christianity had defigrad to Difgrace Religion, he cou'd not have taken a better way to do it, than by making a Saint appear dreis'd with fo much Vanity and Luxury as a Player is, delivering the most severe Maxims of the Gospel on a Theatre, where Licentiousness reigns, and where commonly none affift but Men and Women full of the Spirit of the World.

It were to be wish'd, that those who Compos'd these fort of Pieces with a good Intention, and those who still look on them as things Impu that may be useful, had not forgot these two difgui words Sancta Sanctis, that Holy things ought not to be exposed but to those who are Holy, or who are desirous to be so.

To learn to Sing in our Age, is to learn all Opera the Maxims of Love; what other Songs are fuch made use of to regulate a young Voice, but the M fuch as may corrupt a young Heart? When one than t would form their Voice to Sing the Praises of it is God, they begin by Singing impure Thoughts that w tis on these profane Songs they fit themselves Th to Sing Divine Hymns. If the Opera Tune Pernic have been taken even in the Symphony of In- not the fruments confecrated to the Church, the Song the Se

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too are learn'd by Mouths confecrated to God; and to fay that a Nun has a fine Voice and can Sing welf, is to inform us that she has learnt Amorous and Profane Songs.

What Opinion wou'd a Barbarian or a Turk have of the Value which Christians fet on Purity, if they heard the most licentious, and the most immodest Ballads publickly Sung by Footmen and Children in all the Streets; and Men affembled in open Places, hearkening to Songs that put one to the Blush? If we should say to him, that those are People without Reason and without Conscience who hearken to such Songs; might we not fear that he wou'd call all those too who run to the Opera's, People without Conscience and without Reason?

An Immodest Song fung by Scoundrels in the Com- open Streets, and hearken'd to by other Scountenti- drels, differs from the Opera's, only in that the things Impurity is express'd coarsly and without any le two difguise. The same Spirit reigns on each side. he not both in the Songs and in those who hear them.

Ballad without Blushing, does not Blush at the arn all Opera; we must conclude from thence, that gs are luch only Blush at Words. I doubt whether ce, but the Moral of those Ballads is more Pernicious en one than that of most Opera's, and whether in them ughts that without Love one is good for nothing.

melves of The Opera's are perhaps fo much the more

Tunes Pernicious, that People less Blush at them. 'Tis of In not the Terms that ought to make one Blush, 'tis Song the Sense; that Precept of St. Paul which forbids to .t00 001

name certain Vices, is not only a Precept of

Modesty, 'tis a Precept of Purity.

The Plays out-do Romances, and Opera's In Romances the Evil is learnt, out-do Plays. it infinuates it self at the Plays, but it seizes one at Opera's. An Opera, to define it well, is a concerted heap put together of all that can fosten and corrupt the Heart.

There are Books yet more Pernicious to Innocence, than Romances, Plays, or Opera's; that is the Books of some Physicians, and of some

Caluifts.

Ignorance is the furest guard of Innocence in thele Matters : By informing ones felf of the manner of committing Evil, one rarely learns to fhun it.

'Tis not always to inform themselves of what they are Ignorant of, that People read the Books which treat of these Matters, itis oftner to have the Pleasure of Reading what they

know.

In the Commerce of the Polite World, a Coarfe or Indecent Word will not be endurd; but the Sense of it is suffer'd, and there is no Filth which does not enter into the Conversation ons of most worldly Women, provided it be Nicely wrapt up. There is no difference between the Conversation of Proftitutes, and that of most worldly Women, but in the manner of expressing things.

There are few worldly Women, who are for Angry at the Indecencies which are faid to them, as not to laugh at them; the Laugh that: them, retains the Sawcy Fellow eicapes

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ellow whom whom they pretend they wou'd drive from them.

When a Man lofes his Respect for a Woman, and dares to entertain her with loose Discourse, who do I blame for it? the Woman to whom he speaks; a Man wou'd never think of talking at that rate to her, if she did not let him perceive that she lik'd it.

A Woman who has Nudities and lascivious Pictures for Ornaments of her Closet, authorises the Liberty of those loose Discourses which Men dare to speak to her: they cannot imagine that a Person will be uneasy in hearing sometimes, what he has continually before her Eyes.

To fay that one is not mov'd by immodest Pidures or Discourses, is not to say that one is Chaste, 'tis oft a sign that one is not so.

There is no Person Chaste enough to have no need of fearing little things on the matter of Punity; and to say such things go with me in at one Ear and out at tother, is to forget that tho' this should be so, the Heart would be found in the way.

People commonly are not fensible of the Danger of all those things which hurt Purity, till the Wound is received; nor do they feel that Wound ill 'tis too late to remedy it.

There is nothing in which People profit less by Experience than in matters of Purity; they have fall'n a thousand times, and they delight to fall again.

Every body is fensible of the ill Effects of that Passion which is contrary to Purity, and yet here is no Passion against which People guard themselves themselves less. They do not learn to cure themselves of it, by all that it makes them suffer, they only learn to deplore it; they are skilful in talking against it, but not in securing themselves from it; all the World feels the Evil of it.

fears the Remedy.

There is no other means to preferve Purity but those which our Saviour has taught us, that is to fay, Mortification, Retirement, Prayer, flying even the smallest Occasions. To imagine one can preserve this Virtue in leading a sensual Life, in reading tender Books, and frequenting Spectacles of the same Nature, in studying all that can delight; in a word, in loving the World. is to be in a Dangerous Mistake.

Whatever Virtue a worldly Woman may flatter her self she has, if she frequents the Pleasures of the World, her Virtue is but a Phantom,

will very foon become fo.

If it will be faid that there are Women retir'd from the World, and professing a holy and devout Life who are not the honester Women for I believe it: but what Confequence can be drawn from thence against what I have been faying? If the most retir'd Persons are not fecure from fuch Diforders, what should be thought of those who are less retir'd? In discrediting those Women who live retir'd from the World, People think to raife the value of Worldly Women; but on the contrary, nothing pleads by Wo more against a Woman who lives after the Spirit of the World, than to see one who lives retir'd from it, and yet is not a virtuous Woman for of all the Conclusions that may be drawn and to from World

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from hence, the only just and reasonable one is this, if those who are retir'd from the World; are not over honest Women, those who frequent it are yet less fo. Let all other Consequences be examin'd, and they will be found Defective, unless it could be said that a diffipated and sensual Life is a furer means to preferve Chaffity, than a Holy and Christian Life; but no body hitherto has arriv'd to that height of Delusion. All that those who are Slaves to that Criminal Paffion which I have spoken of, can say, is, that one may practise all the Remedies I have mention'd, without being the Chafter. This is what hinders them from making use of them; but to fay that a Remedy is infignificant, one should have experienc'd it; that which is ineffectual to one may be useful to another, and to refolve against Retirement or avoiding the Pleasures of the World, because there are Persons retird who are not exempt from that Pattion, is to refemble those who would never fend for a Physician, because there are sick People that die.

If there are Devotes that live in Retirement, who are not more Virtuous than others; one needs only enquire of the most worldly Women concerning them, to know the Reason why, notwithstanding their Retreat and their Devotion, they are not Virtuous. 'Tis (will those worldly Women fay) that they are delicate, fond of their Eafe, full of Self-love and of Vanity: These Defects do not proceed from Devotion or Retirement, but from the Temper of the Persons; and to fay that if you should retire from the from World you should not be the more Virtuous, is

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to fay that you shou'd be Vain, full of Self-love. and fond of your Ease, fince you know what renders the Remedy Useless, you are more to blame than another, in faying, it wou'd be in-

fignificant to you.

Let those worldly Persons who tell us that Devotion and avoiding the World are not certain Remedies against Impurity, let them allign us then fome more certain Remedy. they never forfake a Vice which (however harden'd they are) they cannot forbear Lamenting fometimes, and fearing the fatal Confequences of in another Life?

Every Vice has a Pain and a Shame affixed to it, which is as a continual Motive to leave it, but there is none which has this Motive more lively and more frequent than the Vice contra-

ry to Purity.

It wou'd often coft less trouble to break off an Intrigue, than it costs to manage it; and if a Man look'd with equal Eyes in cool Blood on the pain there is in breaking an Engagement, and that which there is in keeping it up, he wou'd conclude for breaking it.

How strongly soever one is posses'd with this Passion, one cannot (even in the height of it) hide from himfelf the Pain and the Shame: Every step that one makes to conceal it from the Eyes of the World, is an Exhortation to put an

End to it.

To call ones felf happy in the midst of all that this Passion makes one suffer, is a Gibberish in which the Heart has no part. 'Tis

Tis said that the Passion of Love blinds, but a greater Evil yet may be sound in it, which is that it leaves the sight clear, and yet makes one act as if they were Blind; when a Man ruines his Estate, and a Woman loses her Reputation, by persisting Obstinately in an Intrigue, are they ignorant of what they lose? They know it and yet they lose it.

The Precautions which a Magistrate, or a Man of any Graver Profession takes to let nothing be known of his Intrigues, is a Mark that

he fees all the Shame of it.

To persist Obstinately in a Passion which leaves no Repose, to love often what one cannot Esteem, to be expos'd every Moment to a thousand Inconveniences, of which being Ridiculous is the least; and to hazard for this one's Eternal Salvation; Can there be a greater Madness imagined? And shou'd not this Idea alone suffice to cure it?

There is no Paffion which better and oftner avenges God of the Contempt that is shewn to

him, than the Paffion of Love.

'Tis said, and there is Reason to say it, that this Passion has caused more Disorders and Confusion in the World than any other; there is no Man who is subject to this Passion, that does not find Proofs of this Truth, in his own particular Case.

Tis faid, (at least in Songs) that without Love there is nothing Great or Illustrious, that 'tis this Passion which Forms great Enterprises, and which gives mighty Views; this is often no more than to say, that 'tis this Passion which occasions the greatest Injustices, When

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When People fay, that the Paffion of Love is necessary to certain Virtues, they forget that there is no Virtue which one is not ready to Sacrifice to it when that Virtue is an Obstacle to it's Designs.

This Paffion in a wicked Nature is a nearer Occasion of all forts of Crimes and Vices, and 'tis often the same thing in the good Na-

ture?

A thousand other Characters, every one worse than another, might with Reason be given of this Paffion, and I know not whether a good one cou'd ever with Reason be given of it; nevertheless, it is the most delighted in, and the most desired of all the Passions. People seek Occasions of it, and are afraid of not finding any.

In hearing the Manner with which Christians deplore the Bonds and the Chains of this Paffion, one wou'd think that their Religion did not teach them any Means of breaking them; and one wou'd have the same Thoughts in seeing how they every day strengthen their Bonds and

their Chains.

The height of the Unreasonableness of this Passion, is the Despair of Overcoming it, as the height of Illusion in it, is the Hopes of Over-

coming it easily.

Wou'd you obtain Salvation? or wou'd you People not obtain it? Who dares to fay he wou'd not, and who dares to fay he wou'd, when he takes no care to shun this Passion, or to overcome it?

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We must then either renounce the Hope's of Salvation, or use the Means which only can secure us against this Passion, or disengage us from it; that is avoiding Occasions, and ferrent Prayer.

of HUMILITY.

TUmility is commonly faid to be the particular and distinctive Virtue of a Christi-, the Heathens knew nothing of it, the Jews rely practis'd it : There are many Christians ho in that are like the Heathens, and yet more the Jews. If Humility makes the Distinctiof the Christian Religion, one may say, at there is no Virtue more rare in Christianity in that by which it is distinguish'd.

When I am attack'd in my Honour, or on my Qua-, I have no Patience. I pardon any thing but stempt. I think without Vanity, I am as much the as another. Who is it that daily talks thus? it a Heathen? Is it a Jew? Is it a Christian? , 'tis all Christians in general. Where does ather give his Son Lessons of Pride? Where d you People taught not to yield the Place, to pute the Preference with most Obstinacy? d not, e takes here do they endeavour to give themselves Diover- actions, and to supplant those who wou'd eit share or contest a Dignity with them? Is it We the Port of the Grand Seignior, or in the gul's Country? Is it in the Synagogues of Aleppo Aleppo or Grand Cairo? No, 'tis at Paris, 'tis at Court, 'tis in the Church, in the Chapters and in the Cloisters.

Humility confifts in having a low Opinion of one's felf; we are not truly Humble till we have filenc'd that fecret Voice, which continually fays to us, That we have a great deal of worth.

All the World owns, that there are many Persons who need only be acquainted with themselves, to have a low Opinion of themselves, and that they wou'd be Humble if they were not Blind or Dissemblers; but they shou'd own that every Body has the same grounds of Humility.

There is no Person who has Merit enough to

know himself, and not be Humble.

All Men are born Blind to themselves; this Blindness augments with the Commerce of he World, and cannot be diffipated. Civility for tifies it by Flatteries and Praises; every thing which does not Flatter feems an Affront, and Sincere Man is called Brutal in the Commerce

of the World.

Great Persons are generally less Humble than others, because they are more Blind; 'is not that they are Born more fo, but 'tis that all the World makes it a Duty to Blind them: How can a Man have a low Opinion of himself, when he does not hear a word, or read an Epistle De dicatory, or fee his Name any where, without feeing, without reading, without hearing, that he is a Great Man, an Illustrious, Wonderful Incomparable Man. dered lot had, enconight

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If the Vanity of Titles is an Opffacle to Humility, I don't know to which it will be most imputed, whether to the Great Perfons who receive them, or to the Lower who give them : And I doubt whether the Gibbetish of fost things, of Flatteries and Praises which is usually Addressed to the Great, and to the Women, is well authorised before God, by that Custom which authorifes it among Men.

'Tis a Gibberish, say the Great, and the Women of good Senfe, in speaking of the Praises which are given them, and we believe nothing of it more or less. They deceive themselves. they believe more than less of it. This Gibberish pleases them, and it wou'd not please them if they did not believe fomething of it.

That which makes a Commendation delicate or gross, is not at Bottom, the Terms or the mrn of him who commends, 'tis the Taste of him who is commended; any Praise of which he can believe fomething, feems delicate to him, how gross soever it be: And he calls none gross but that which he can believe nothing of. not

There are Persons who never think any Prailes gross; tho' there are no Christians to whom it feems allowable to think any Delicate.

The Difficulty of being Humble when one is De Flattered, shou'd not make it be concluded, that hout this Difficulty is found among none but Women that and Great Persons. There is no Body so abanaful don'd by all the World as not to have some one who Flatters him; If a Man had but one only Friend left him, one might fay, that there wou'd be still one Flatterer lest him. If he had none, the Flatterer that wou'd then be lest him wou'd be himself.

In whatever Condition one is, one looks on their Friends as one does on an agreeable Solitude that inclines one to thinking; we love a fine Solitude because it sets us upon thinking of our selves, we love our Friends because they set

us upon talking of our felves.

Whatever State a Man is in, he says to himfelf, I have more Worth than such a one: In
whatever State he is, 'tis difficult for him to be
Humble. Perhaps he acknowledges that there
are some of more Worth than he, but he wou'd
likewise have it acknowledged that there some
who have less Worth. He makes himself amends
for the Shame of having less Worth than some,
by the Glory of having more Worth than
others.

All the World loves Riches. I believe they are more lov'd for the Distinction, than for the

Conveniences they give.

We say that it is common to be Proud in Prosperity; but it is no less common to be so in Adversity: Self-love finds less Reason to exalt it self in a high than in a low Fortune. A great Fortune serves instead of Vanity in him who is happy, but Vanity compensates a great Fortune in him who is Unhappy.

People are aftonished that a Man is not Exalted, when all the World Conspires to Exalt him; I am more aftonished if he is Humbled, when all the World Conspires to Humble him; it perhaps on this Principle that the Christian Religi-

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Religion (which tends to make us perfectly Humble) forbids us to defire Prosperity, not because it is difficult to be Happy and Humble, but because it is more perfect to be Humble and Unhappy.

To think of nothing in the World, but of enriching and raising one's felf, is to design to render the Practice of Humility either Impossi-

ble, or Imperfect.

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ian iGod alone knows who is truly Humble, all others may be mistaken in it, for all the signs of

Humility are doubtful.

The Marks by which others judge that a Chriflian is Humble, suffices sometimes to persuade himself that he is so, he judges of himself as they judge of him: All others may be mistaken in the judgment they make of his Humility, but none may be more mistaken in it than himself.

To think one has certain Virtues, is not always a false Judgment, but it is always false when one thinks one has Humility. This is a Virtue which one cannot give Proofs of to one's

felf.

There is no one has true Humility, but he

who is Humble and thinks he is not fo.

A perfectly Humble Man, is not he who thinks ill of himself, when others speak Well of him. The Perfection of Humility has yet a higher Degree, which is to think ill of one's self when others speak Ill of us.

Most Christians are Humble enough when they are Flattered, one needs but find fault with

them to Discover that they are not so.

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There are Actions that feem Marks of an Heroick Humility, which are only nicer turns of Why does this Man take the lowest Place, to whom the highest is due? 'Tis that every one may put him in his right Place. He wou'd have been more Humble if he had taken it of himfelf.

There is never any Humility in feeking Praifes, but there is sometimes a great deal in suffering them; you are vex'd at being Praised in certain Circumstances, because you are afraid that you shall be accus'd of having fought the Praises that are given you: If you were Humble, you wou'd not be vex'd, you wou'd fuffer both the Praites that are given you, and the Judgment that may be made of it.

All that is fought for in Matter of Praife, is an Effect of Pride: There is Pride in faying I wou'd have you Praise me, and there is as much in faying I wou'd not have you Praise me.

There is no Humility in composing ones own Epitaph, and he that gives orders to have Pompous Titles added to his Name, is no more Vain than he who forbids it.

When a Great Man, or a Lady of Quality condescend to serve the Poor, People cry out that they are very Humble, they shou'd be content with faying they are Charitable; for there is no place where a Great Person is less Humbled than when he Visits an Hospital, all the World Proclaims that it is a Great Lord; a Poor Man does not receive the services of a Great Person as he receives those of another; and to fay to him, Ab my Lord, bow can you have so much Humility ?

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There is an Action related of Father Angel de Foyeuse, which has pass'd for a proof of an extraordinary Humility. He went, being a Capuchin to beg a Lodging at a Gentleman's House, who had been his Page, when he was Marrescal of France; as he did not name himself, they made him lie in a Stable, he, and a Father who accompanied him. The Humility of this Holy Man is admird, but I admire that of his Companion more. Father Angel being known the next Day, had a thousand Excuses, and a thousand Reparations made him. for the ill Treatment that had been given him : but his Companion who expected no return, must have had as much or more Humility than he, not to name him the Night before. It was greater Humility in him who Humbled himfelf when no Body was to Exalt him, than in the other.

When the Son of God said, that we shou'd take the lowest Seat at a Feast, that we might be made to go up higher, he did not intend to say, that this shou'd be the Motive of that Humility; he only design'd to shew us that Humility is generally recompensed: And this Parable is but an Image of the Rewards which God destines to the Humble in Heaven. To take the lowest Place that we may have the highest, is not Humility, but Pride, and there is never any Humility in taking the lowest Place, but when one

has no right to take another.

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A Man who having a right to the highest Place, waits to have it given him before he takes it, is not an Humble Man, he is a Polite Man, one who knows how to behave himself.

Humility confifts in having a mean Idea of ones felf, and yet all the Business of Man from his Birth to his Death, is to enlarge and heighten the Idea which he has of himself; at what time

then is he Humble?

Nothing pleases me more, (said some time ago, a Man who has a great deal of Merit) than to think that when any one names my Name, he conceives the Idea of an Honest Man. He who spoke thus, is perhaps an Honest Man, but I don't

think him very Humble.

§. 2. How is the Profession of a Magistrate, a Commander, a Man of Learning consider'd in the World? As Professions useful to the Publick? No, they are considered as Professions which the Publick Esteems. Men Study to acquire a Talent, or to cultivate that which they have, only to acquire and cultivate with it the Publick Esteem.

One certain Mark of true Humility, is to be willing to be forgotten, but it is not allowable for him who wou'd be forgot, to relish the Pleafure of making the World forget him: This Complailance is Pride. The first Effect of Humility, is to banish all Reslection on our Virtues, the Humble are allowed to have no Reslection on themselves but to Despise themselves.

There is Humility in renouncing the World, and hiding ones felt in a Solitude: But there is mone in Entertaining the World which one has

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lest (when there is no need of it) with the sweetness and the Tranquillity of our Solitude: We have Reason to sear, that those who do not leave the World till they have made it resound with their Farewels, and who after they have lest it, make it resound with their Letters, may lose a little the Recompence of their Humility.

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Tis hard to comprehend how the Custom has been introduc'd in Christianity, of making great and shining Assemblies on the Day that a Young Woman takes the Habit, or becomes a profess'd Nun; is it to give the World a useful Instruction and Example? Perhaps this might be the Motive of that Custom, but I much fear that instead of an Example of Humility, they give an Example of Vanity.

§. 3. If all Devotes were Humble, there are many Directors who wou'd have no Devotes.

If all Preachers were Humble, there wou'd be no Christians without Instruction: The greatest of them wou'd Preach in the Country, and at the Hospitals, and wou'd there Instruct the Poor and the Meanest of the Country People.

There is no Christian who gives a more visible and a more guilty Mark of his Vanity, than a Divine who thinks himself too great a Man to Preach to the Poor. A Divine of this Character is not worthy to Preach to any one, he more needs to have others Preach to him.

to be like others, as it is in others to resolve not to be like others, as it is in others to resolve not to be like them; a little Citizen who will live like a Man of Quality, is sometimes less Vain than a Man of Quality who will live like a mean Citizen.

To fay one is Hasty, is to say one is not Humble; there is no Affront capable of making one angry, if we think all the ill of our selves, that

others may fay or think of us.

Humility is never Founded on Falshood, and when we say that none is truly Humble, but he who has a mean Opinion of himself, it is because there is no Man that can have any other if he knew himself. To be Humble is not to be ignorant of our Merit and our Talents, 'tis to find Motives of Humility in that Merit and those Talents.

The greater Quality you are of, and the more Merit and Talents you have, the more you ought to Humble your felf. Why? Because the more you seem distinguish'd by all those things, the more you shou'd be sensible how little you make the Use which you ought to make of them. Who can be Proud of a thing that he misuses, the Talent ought to give you less Pride, than the ill Use you make of it ought to give you Humility.

To have a Right not to be Humble, we shou'd be able to say to our selves, that we have nothing to reproach our selves with. It is more than a thousand Years, since this Language in the Mouth of a Christian, is Vanity and Ly-

ing.

6. 5. I believe a Man Humble who suffers Persecution, but I do not believe him so, when he boasts that he knows how to endure it. Nothing persuades me more, that he suffers it with Impatience, than hearing him say, that he suffers it Chearfully.

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One must have a great deal of Humility to suffer patiently those Persecutions and Calumnies which one can defend ones self from; but one must have more to suffer others patiently. Vanity has less share in those things which are of Necessity, than in those which are of our own choice.

A Man who knows his own Heart well, will find nothing in himself but Motives of Humility, when he conceives any Pride, he quits the Knowledge he has of himself, to regulate his Sentiments on that which he thinks he has of others. It is true, says he, I am not irreproachable, but there are some who are less so than I: As this Vanity is only sounded on the Desects of others, it must be granted, that it has a very uncertain Foundation, you have but an uncercertain Knowledge of others, you have a certain one of your own Desects, regulate your Sentiments on that which is certain and you will then be Humble.

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§. 6. A Man of Learning, for Example, cannot think himself Ignorant, but neither can he think that another in his place might not have had more Knowledge than he, and might not have made a better use of his Knowledge. There needs no more to make him Humble.

How Learned so ever a Man is, he finds himself Ignorant even in the things which he knows best. How much does one find every Day that one wants either Memory or Presence of Mind. It is the same in other Qualities and other Talents; the same Man is different from himself according to Humour and Times: The best Authors have writ ill Pieces, the greatest Generals have committed Errors: There is no Man who is always satisfied with himself, even in the things that one wou'd think he shou'd be most satisfied with; There is then no Man that ought not to be Humble.

To be Proud, is to be fatisfied with ones self; a Character ridiculous even in the Eyes of the

World.

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The Disquiets, the Troubles and the Cares which Vanity gives, are so many Lessons of

Humility.

A Man, who amidst the continual Weaknesses which he Experiences in himself, glories in his Quality, his Talent, or his Station, has as Ill-grounded a Vanity as that of a Galley-Slave wou'd be, who shou'd glory in being the first that was fasten'd to the Chain.

Vanity raises us above others, and it notwithstanding needs the help of others to raise it self.

You say that in the happy Situation where Fortune and Fame has plac'd you, you have no need of me; you are mistaken, you have need of one to whom you speak with so much Pride as you do to me; I hearken to you, and at the time when you despise my Services, I render you a great one, I hearken to you without contradicting you

Let a Man fay to himself as much as he will, that he has a great deal of Worth; he would yet perhaps be Humble, if he had no Body

else that said the same thing to him.

Seeking Praises, is more a sign of the Distrust than of the Considence one has of ones Merit; the more a Man desires to be praised, the more he is Praise Man his F

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he is Conscious of not deserving it; one desires Praises on the same Principle that makes a poor Man defire Alms, the one feeks Help to support his Fortune, and the other to support his Vanity.

This Vain, this Haughty Man, who looks on all the World with Diseain, who does not speak a word to his Footmen and his Dometricks, that is not a Reproach or a Term of Contempt, who paffing thro' the Crowd, will not degn to Salute or Regard any one, to whom does he owe his Vanity? To the People, the Footmen,

and the Crowd which he despises.

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Those Antient Heroes who gave their Names to the Months and the Days of the Year, and who fill'd all the Roads and the Streets with their Elogies, refemble a Man who tearing Fortune shou'd fail him, secures Rents, and Bargains every way; the Measures one takes to make fure of Funds, and to improve ones Estate, are less a fign of Riches than of the Fear of Poverty.

- A Haughty Gait and Air, is in a Vain Man, what the care of dreffing Neatly is in a poor Man; the one puts all he is worth upon him that he may not feem poor, and the other does the fame that he may not appear despicable.

The Air and Gait is in a proud Man, what an Humble and Trembling Air is in a poor Man, a tacite begging for what he has not; the proud Man who steps Haughtily begs Esteem and Reputation, as the poor Man who walks Dejectedly begs an Alms.

'Tis thought that a Vain and Haughty Air is the first Mark of Vanity, but one may more justly

fay, that it is the last Refuge of it. A Man who has not wherewith to fustain a Character by his Merit, feeks to do it by the Airs which he affects.

People commonly think that a Man who walks proudly and gives himself haughty Airs, has a good Opinion of himfelf, perhaps they wou'd judge more truly, if they thought he had an ill one.

There are many to whom it would fuffice to render them Humble, to reduce them to regulate their Sentiments by the Opinion they have of themselves.

Proud and Haughty Airs, are in some an Artifice defign'd to hide the ill Opinion they have of themselves, and in others an Effect of the Habit they have taken of thinking well of themfelves.

Of all Vain Men, he is the most mistaken, who thinks to make himself be Valued by the Airs of Vanity he affects. We have faid a thoufand times that People generally Despise those who are afraid of being Despised.

There is no Body in reality who might find more Motives of Humility, and more Facility to practife that Virtue, than one who appears Vain; all the World takes pleasure in Humbling him.

§. 7. Tho' the Commerce of the World helps, as I have faid, to nourish Pride, yet it might be faid, that there is no Virtue (to take things rightly) which the Commerce of the World teaches better than Humility.

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 T_0 vote, ly en Persons separated from the World, as Monks and Hermits, have commonly no other ground for their Vanity, but because they are separated from the World; if they knew it better, they wou'd perhaps learn to be more Humble.

Why has it been in all times observed, that the most excessive Vanity was to be found among Recluses and Persons of a Holy Profession? 'Tis because in those States People think they have

most right to fay, I am not like others.

The more those Distinctions, which make a Man say I am not like others, are sounded on Virtues dissicult to practice, the more they give Pride; a Monastick who wears nothing but course Stuff and Hair-cloath, and who walks Bare-soot, has more Temptation to Vanity than a Courtier who is a Slave to the Fashions.

'Tis not only because there is no Christian Virtue without Humility, that Humility is necessary for those who profess a Life of Penance and Mortification; 'tis because the profession they make of being Penitent and Mortified, distinguishes them more from the rest of Christians. He who considers that Profession only by this distinction, will be Vain and Proud, and 'tis therefore that the most austere Monasticks, and the most declar'd Devotes, are sometimes less Humble than other People.

The Respect which is paid to the Habit of a Monastick, is a Temptation to Vanity to him who

wears it.

To take upon one to be a Monastick, or a Devote, without being Humble, or without sincerely endeavouring to become so, is to take up a Profession which one knows nothing of and which one will not learn a server . . so a region su

A Magnificent Habit Flatters Vanity, but and simple and auftere Habit; fometimes irritates and firs it up. as a seril but the trans. Sta sto it

Taking a Penitent Habit, is never commendable in Christianity, but when the Persons who take it may be affur'd, that by dreffing themfelves in that manner, they shall not give Incite-

ments to their Vanity.

Tis usual to fay (in speaking of an austere Order) in fuch an Order they lie on the Ground, they wear no Linen, &c. Those who speak thus forget the Principal thing, they should say in such an Order, they begin by being Humble, and they wear no Linen, they lie on the Ground. Oc.

There are fome Orders (faid a Great Prince of this Age) where they Mortifie the Spirit by the Body, there are others where they Mortific the Body by the Spirit; I think all the Religious ought to be like thefe laft, one does not always find, from the Mortification of the Body, a defire of Mortifying the Soul, but when the Spirit is Mortified, one always finds a defire of Mortifying the Body.

A Body humbled under a Penitent Habit, is only of Value as it ferves for a Model to the Soul to Humble its felf by, and a Man is no more Religious for being dress'd in that manner than a Man is a Carver, for having fine Models in

his House.

To fay that the Religious Habit is infignifican for acquiring Humility, is to lay that a Model

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One v those Per pleas'd to wife than you are o Without is useless for Learning Sculpture, the one and the other is only useless to those who know not how to make Use of them; and to say that a Religious or a Modest Habit is useless, because there are Monasticks and Devotes who are Proud, is to say that Models are useless, because there are ill Sculptors.

I commend you for Entring into an Order, and taking the Habit; I approve your wearing a plain simple Dress; but I approve and commend you only, because I suppose that you are

Humble, or that you will become fo.

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The Ridiculousness of a Magistrate who shou'd sit on the Bench with a Feather or an Embroider'd Coat, wou'd be less Extravagant, than that of a Monastick, who is Proud under Hair and Sackcloth.

'Tis the height of Ridiculousness to set up for a fine Mein, and Air, under a Dress which

was only Invented to give an ill one.

Never did the whimical Imagination of Man Invent a more fantastical Masquerade, than that which the Publick is every Day entertain'd with, by those who under a hideous Sackcloth have the Airs, the Deportment, and the Vanity of the most worldly Persons. There is perhaps more of Simplicity than of Depravation in this, but the Ridiculousness of it cannot be avoided.

One who lives in the World might say to those Persons, Gentlemen, since you have been pleas'd to leave us and to dress your selves otherwise than we do, either appear no more unless you are called; or if you will come among us without being call'd, if you will partake of our Feasts.

Feasts, our Conversations, and our Diversions, have at least the Complaisance to dress like us.

A Monastick's not being allow'd to change his Habit, is a Law for him not to appear any more in the World, without being call'd thither by Charity and Zeal.

Vanity recals more People to the World than

it withdraws from the World.

Every one is Eloquent in giving Lessons of Humility to Monasticks and Devotes, but none have a more lively Eloquence on that Subject than worldly Persons; and the Folly of those who are Vain in a Holy Profession, is so much the more gross, that no body approves of it.

§. 8. There are some Persons in whom one finds Sentiments of Humility except in one Case, that is, when their Counsel is asked, or when there is need of their Help; they will then be thought in the right, and render themselves

Necessary.

There are few Men who have Humility enough, not to take upon them to give Counfel; and there are yet fewer who are Humble enough to know how to give it well; as foon as they are Confulted, they will answer; as foon as they have answered, they would be thought in the right.

The tone with which a Man fays, This is my Sentiment, you may do just as you please,

belies the Indifference he affects.

Tis less our Zeal and Charity than our Pride that makes us Esteem as our own a Business on which we are Consulted:

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When Great Po with his answer, believ'd tell the A Marriage, or some other considerable Affair is talked of; one sees upon that a thousand People go and come, whisper, make private Informations, put themselves forward, grow warm in the Cause; perhaps not one of these People has been seriously Consulted on this Affair, or this Marriage: However, if either is concluded, every one of them will say, who do you speak of it to? 'Twas I that did it. What shou'd these People be call'd, forward stricking Persons? No, Vain Persons.

A Man who has Understanding or Zeal enough to give a good Counsel, ought to have Humility enough, to allow one not to follow it.

Every one abounds in his own Sense; 'tis be-

cause no body has true Humility.

§. 9. To be confided in by a Great Man, pleases our Vanity, but there is something that Flatters it more, that is, to have it thought that he confides in us.

If Men were asked which they shou'd like best, to be Consident to a Great Man, without being thought to be so, or to have it thought that they were, without being so; the greater Number wou'd chuse the last.

The Vanity which a Great Man raises in him to whom he trusts his Secret, disposes him not

to keep it.

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When one fays to a Man, Sir, you fee such a Great Person every Day, no doubt he trusts you with his most Important Secrets; this Man will answer, No; but he wou'd be very forry to be believ'd; He thinks 'tis Fidelity enough not to tell the Secret. But, if he had no Vanity he wou'd

wou'd fee that Fidelity requires yet something more, that is, not even to let it be thought that any Secret has been trusted to him.

In an Affair of Importance, one can never depend on the Fidelity of a Man, who has a

great deal of Vanity.

Men restrain their Vanity sometimes till the Secret is known; but when it is known they restrain it no longer, they are fond of saying, I knew it before.

§. 10. There are few Persons of great Name and of great Quality, who even in conceasing themselves when they do good Works, have Humility enough to be unwilling to be known, or not easily to pardon those who Discover them.

A Citizen, or Mean Tradesman, who counterfeits a Great Lord, has less Vanity in passing for such, than a Great Lord who disguises himself like a Mean Tradesman, has in being known

for what he is.

Affectations of Modesty and of Simplicity are more accommodated to Vanity, than they are contrary to it; and a Man is much more surely Humble when he passes for just what he is.

A Man who neglects an Injury or a Contempt, when he does not do it upon a principle of Religion, nor out of Policy, or Cowardice, is much more Vain and Haughty than he who endeavours to be Revenged.

People admire some Acts of Moderation and Modesty in Great Men, which are only Refine-

ments of Vanity.

It cannot be said with certainty that any Action is a Virtue, unless it can be certainly known that he who practises it has Humility. A

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that M the Si think A Man who is truly a good Man, distrusts a great Fortune, and a great Reputation; but he does not less distrust great Virtues: One has no less need of Humility to sustain an Eminent Virtue, than to sustain a great Fortune, or a great Reputation: A Man who is not Humble, seeks a Rock when he wou'd become Rich or Powerful, but he finds one when he will take upon him to practise Eminent Virtues.

Not to limit ones felf to small or obscure Virtues, is a Precept only to those who are truly

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§. 11. There is no Man who is sensible enough of all his own Weaknesses, not to think himself fit to correct the Weaknesses of others.

Commonly in those Communities which makes Profession of a Zeal for Souls, they chuse none for Preachers but those who have given Marks of their Vanity, in asking to be Elected to that Ministry; they ought to Elect none but the Humble.

Tis only allowable for the Humble to be learned in Matters of Religion. Nothing has been in all Times more pernicious to Religion than a Proud Divine, when his other Vices did not take him off from his Conceitedness.

The Triumph of Christian Humility, is not a Great Prince or a King Humble, 'tis a Learned

Man Humble.

That which makes Humility so rare, is, not that Men are ignorant of the Ridiculousness or the Sin of Vanity, 'tis that they disguise it, or think it authoris'd in them.

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Every one has a fure and easie way to be Humble, or to take a Resolution of becoming fo, that is the Manner in which every one looks on those who are Vain; they are Offended with it, they Contemn it; Is it so difficult to think that that which offends us in them, offends them likewise in us? To render a Man Humble, I wou'd only oblige him to look on himfelf with the same Disposition, in which he is, with Respect to others who appear to him to be Vain, he wou'd have as much Shame for his own Vanity, as he has Contempt for that of others.

There wou'd need no more than to Reflect on all that befals us to make us Humble, who is there that is latisfied with his Friends, his Fortune, and the Success of his Designs? One always finds in all these things something to Humble us; our Designs miscarry, our Fortune does not advance, our Friends fail us, these are so

many Motives of Humility.

How Ingenious foever one is in finding the cause of our ill Success without us, one always imputes it a little to ones self; at least one thinks ones felf Unhappy, and there shou'd need

no more to make us Humble.

The Commerce of the World is a Commerce of Dependance, there is none but a Soveraign who has not some body, before whom he is oblig'd to a Submission: But even he depends in fome Manner on those who Humble themselves before him, there is no body Independant, and by consequence there is no body who may not be Humble; What greater Motive of Hamility than an Eternal Dependance?

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When I see a Great Man of whom I am to ask a Favour, the need I have of him, and the Elevation in which he is above me gives me some Humiliation, and wou'd give me Humility if I was wife; this Great Man finds at Versailles the same Humiliation which he has given me, and if he was wife he wou'd be Humble.

A Good Man finds that Humiliation in his Virtues, which a Courtier finds at Court; he does not practife one without Reproaching himfelf with the Weaknesses of his Virtue, and without being sensible of the need he has of God; 'tis no wonder then that he is Humble.

When it is faid, Men do not profit by their Miffortunes, 'tis commonly meant that they do not become the more Wise, and the more Prudent, and I add that they do not become the more Humble.

If one shou'd say that there is a Country where all the Inhabitants are Blind, Insirm, Unhappy, and Wicked; and that notwithstanding all those People are Vain, Proud, and Haughty; it wou'd be asked where that Country is, and one might answer those that asked, it is your own Country.

If a Man cou'd be separated from himself, to consider himself Impartially, there is no body he wou'd despise more: Humility teaches him to separate and to consider himself in that manner.

A Man whom Fortune renders Proud is Contemptible, but he is less so than one who grows Proud of his Virtue; the one has a Fortune at least, but the other has not the Virtue which he is Proud of.

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The Blindness of Vanity, appears by the Measure of that Conceitedness it gives us; Birth and Quality which does not depend on us, is notwithstanding that which we are Proudest of.

We say to worldly Persons that to practise Humility, they must remember that they have nothing from themselves: I don't know whether this is a good way to render them Humble, since that which gives them most Pride is what they have not from themselves, their Birth.

Choice that God has made of him to place him in one Condition, rather than another; what other Reason can be given for his Conceitedness? He ought then at the same time to remember, that God who has chosen him for an Elevated Station; forbids him to be Proud of it. Men take kindly of God the Birth by which he has distinguish'd them, and they take ill of him the Humility he has Commanded them in it; one ought to be Humble in an high Station, if it were only in acknowledgment to him who has plac'd us there.

He who is conceited of his Birth, shews himfelf to be Unworthy of the choice that God has made of him, to be Born in a high Station.

Generosity, Greatness of Mind, Probity, and the other Virtues, serve to make us bear up our Quality: But Humility only shews that we are worthy of it.

True Humility particularly requires us to humble our felves before God, but it does not allow us to Exalt our felves before Men; He who is Humble with God, is never Vain and Proud with the Men

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with Men, and that Orator who designing to praise a Saint, said that He was as Humble in the Presence of God, as he was Haughty to Men, knew neither the Character of Humility nor that of a Saint.

Princes requires of their Creatures, an Acknow-ledgment of their Dependance: This Acknow-ledgment with Respect to God, is of the same Nature with that which Princes require; 'tis not enough to say to the Prince I owe you all, unless the Behaviour show that one is persuaded of it; and the Humility that God requires, is (if I may so express my self) a Humility of the Thoughts and of the Behaviour.

14

Of Forgiving Injuries, and of Reconciliation.

Own that there are some Injuries so grievous, that one has need of all the Christian Fortitude, to sorget, and to sorgive them: But if one never quarrel'd with a Neighbour but when he had receiv'd such Injuries, one would rarely quarrel with him.

There is no body that has not some Neighbour with whom he is at Variance; sew could make us comprehend what it is that divides

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A Man is fometimes two Hours in Explaining the Reasons he has to be at Variance with his Neighbour, in which no other thing can be comprehended but that he had a Mind to Quarrel.

There are others who never come to this Explication; People think it is out of Prudence, or because the Injury is too great to be repeated; that's a Mistake, 'tis that the Injury is so Small and so Chimerical, that they wou'd be asham'd to make it known.

Few People wou'd be angry, if they had not

refolv'd to be angry.

One wou'd not think that the Corruption or the Fantasticalness of Man, cou'd go so far as to be glad of receiving an Injury to have the Pleafure of being Angry; this is however what happens every day: When a Man has an Antipathy, or bears Envy to another, he comforts himself for receiving an Injury from him, by the Pleafure he has in doing him another; the Injury he receives is a kind of Relief which sets his Envy and Antipathy at Ease, all that constrains these two Passions gives Pain, all that dilates them, gives Pleasure even to Injuries and ill Usage.

Few People wou'd grow Angry so easily as they do, if they did not begin to be Angry before they are Injur'd; they quickly take Fire because the Fewel was dispos'd to it long ago by Envy or Natural Aversion. I think you my Friend, I let sall a word to you which you take amis; behold you are to day in a Fury against me, and to Morrow you will grow Cold to me: I was mistaken when I took you to be my Friend.

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There are few People who can be fure when they fay a thing that may be ill taken, that it will be well taken; there are yet fewer who

can be affur'd of taking it well.

A Man may say to him that is Angry, I did not think that what I said wou'd have anger'd you, and the other may answer him, neither did I think I shou'd have been angry at it. One little knows others, and one as little knows ones self on this Point.

I had no design to anger you, says one, and t'other may likewise say, I had no design to be angry; as that which makes me angry broke from you in spight of your self, so did my anger from me. The one is sometimes as much surprised at his being angry, as the other at having given the Occasion of it.

You ought then no more to be offended with a Man for being Angry, than you wou'd have him offended with you for having given him the Occasion; you wou'd have him excuse your Indiscretion, do you then excuse his Passion and

his Haftiness.

Men are very little Just to themselves on this Point, they think themselves acquitted when they say, I had no intention to anger him, wherefore is he angry? They will have all the blame lie on his side who is angry, it shou'd at least be divided.

To fay I had no intention of making him Angry, why is he so? And to stop there, is to prove that you had an intention to Anger him. Your Intention can no way be judg'd of, but by the care you take to repair the Offence which you have happen'd to give.

There

There is no Cafe in which People make a Circle from whence it is more difficult to get out than from this. A Man who had no intencion to offend another, is angry when he fees him Angry, and he who took offence without Caufe, is angry in his turn to fee that the other is Angry too. Thin or a commu yarsomy

When Anger is once begun, it is not fo eafily

ended as it was begun and stook and all the

One is commonly cheated ones felf by the Semblance one makes of being Angry; a Man who affects an Anger to have the Pleafure of being appeas'd, rarely finds all the Pleasure in it which he propos'd; 'tis hard to appeale him as much as he defires, and often a real Anger is the fole Fruit, that a feigned and affected Anger produces.

'Tis faid, that feeming to be Angry to have the Pleasure of being Reconcil'd, is a High seaforing to Friendship; if it be so, one may say that this High seasoning is of the same Nature with all others, of which the too frequent Use ferves rather to dull than to quicken the Relish. A Man who will often try his Friends this way, Fatigues, more than he Enlivens their Friendthip.

Christianity agrees yet less with this Seasoning than Friendship does, it condemns Rensentment and Anger fo far, as not to allow even the Affectation and Appearance of it. Unquiet Spirits are yet less good Christians than they are good Friends was a sone Yue to aved aw

Antipathy is an involuntary Sentiment; but it becomes voluntary when one does not refift it;

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It may be overcome as well as any other, but Men delight to include and to nourrish it.

Man has more Pleasure in following his Aversions, than his Sympathies, because they sooth

his Pride more loos only on bus

Antipathy separates us from our Neighbour; Sympathy unites us to him. Vanity agrees better with the first than the other, it is easier to raise our selves above People when we are separated from them, than when we are united with them; 'tis therefore that Antipathy is less resisted in the World than Sympathy; and that the Number of those who hate, is yet greater than of those who love.

Women are generally more violent in their Hatred than Men, because they have more

Vanity.

We find Women enough who can resist Love, but we rarely find any who can resist Hatred.

Tis said that Love blinds, but Hatred blinds yet more; We rarely see any Devotes of either Sex Blind enough to think themselves Devotes in a Commerce of Gallantry; but this Blindness is common with Respect to Hatred, they think they may Hate and not be the less a Depote.

Love generally fooths only the Heart and the Senfes; but Hatred fooths the Heart and the

Mind.

There is more Self-love in Hating than in

Loving.

we have for any one, is feeking to Quarrel with

voluntary when one does not tell it?

One

One wou'd think that Antipathy shou'd make us sly those who cause it, as Sympathy makes us seek them, but we often find the contrary; there are Persons that one sollows and hunts after purely because one seels an Antipathy for them, one defires they shou'd know it, and has a Pleasure in letting them see it.

Antipathy is like all the other Passions, not contented, but when it is gratified: And it is commonly that which of all the Passions one

last opposes. not

Those who have learn'd to resist their Antipathies, to vanquish or to mortiste them, have

not yet begun to be Christians.

We are equally oblig'd by Christianity to combat the Antipathy we have for our Neighbour, and to soften that which he has for us; one and the same Remedy serves to Cure both, that is to do him Kindnesses; in doing good to those we do not Love, we bring our selves by degrees to love them, and we likewise bring those who do not love us, to love us by doing them good.

In the List of those to whom we wou'd do Relations Kindnesses, we place our Parents, our Friends, our Benefactors; but there are some whom a Christian shou'd place before all those, which are Persons he does not love, and by whom he

is not beloved.

Nothing better shews the perswasion People are in, that there is very little Christianity, than the manner with which a Man receives the Kindnesses an Enemy does him, How, says he, what makes him think of doing me a Kindness, I

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who am his Enemy! 'Tis as if he faid, How,

what makes him think of being a Christian!

The good Offices that are receiv'd from an Enemy are generally taken for Insults, whence comes this Fantasticalness? 'Tis that he who receives the Favour is not a Christian, and does not believe the Person from whom he receives it to be a better Christian than himself.

The Obligation of doing good to our Enemies, includes that of doing it in fuch a manner.

that he cannot take it for an Infult.

§. 2. There is little Christianity in the manner of Peoples Quarrelling with a Neighbour; but there is often yet less in the Manner by which they are Reconcil'd to him.

Employing others to Reconcile us, is losing

the Merit of the Reconciliation.

If one doubted that Christians were asham'd to be Christians, one need no more to be assur'd of it, than to see the manner in which Reconciliations are made; People say without Shame, I am Reconciled because such a one begg'd it of me, and I cou'd not refuse him; but they wou'd be asham'd to say, I have Reconciled my self because God Commands it.

To make the steps to a Reconciliation be made by a third Person, is giving him the Employment that God has reserved for himself.

An Honest Man is offended when having offered his Assistance to make a Reconcilement, it is Rejected, and another afterwards made use of: How much then shou'd God be Offended when he is never Regarded in making Reconcilements.

God

God urges you to be Reconcil'd, you Swear you never will; a Prince commands it, a Man of Authority requires it, and 'tis a thing done;

what an Affront is this to God!

'Tis not meerly by a Preferance of the Authority of a Man to that of God, that Great Men are engag'd in making Reconcilements; 'tis because People will not be sincerely Reconcild. Men are contented with the Outside, God requires the Heart; People prefer those who require only the Outside, because they will not

give the Heart.

Tis not that one may be authorized to render the Heart that Men are employed in making Reconciliations; 'tis oftner that one may be authorized not to render it: Don't we see that this is what is commonly said in Essect, when at the desire of another one has consented to go to a Person with whom one was at Variance; I have done what they wou'd, says he, I have gone to see him, I have Embrac'd him, what will they have me do more? A Man wou'd not speak thus, if he had only regarded the Authority of God in being Reconcil'd, he wou'd know well that God accounts these Visits, these Embraces, all these Outsides as nothing, if the Heart is not given with them.

To yeild all the outward Marks, and not give the Heart, is a frivolous Reconciliation: But to fay that one gives the Heart, when one refuses those outward Marks, is a Reconciliation

as frivolous.

I bear him no ill will, say some, but I shall not see him: What wou'd they do more, if they did bear him ill will?

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Injury gerous owes I have Reasons not to see him, say they; they wou'd find it very difficult sometimes to tell what those Reasons are.

If I shou'd see him he wou'd make an ill use of it; but a worse use will be made of it if you do not see him, he will think you still his Enemy, and the Publick will think the same thing; this is a greater Evil than that which you feat.

Tis not the first time, add they, that he has done thus: But our Saviour has set no Measure, no Bounds to Reconciliation; he has said that we must forgive our Neighbour even to seventy times, seven times, that is to say, an infinity of times.

But it is good to punish him, say they again, he does this too often, and he shou'd he made sensible of it; you take the wrong part, the Charity that God requires of you on this Occasion, is not that of Punishing your Neighbour, but that of Forgiving him.

But my Quality, my Station, my Reputation, will not suffer me to see him. You deceive your self, that which forbids you to see him, is only the Hatred you have for him, or your Resentment of the Injury he has done you; if he had done you no Injury, or if you lov'd him, your Reputation, your Station, and your Quality wou'd not hinder you from seeing him; you us'd to see him before, are not you the same you was? Is not he the same he was? No, you say, his proceedings has chang'd him with Respect to me, the Injury be has done me has let me know that it is Dangerous to see him, and that he does not pay what he owes to my Quality and Station. You must grant then

then that that which hinders you from feeing him is the Injury he has done you, and you shou'd fear that, whilst you act by this Motive, you may deceive your self on the Decencies of your Rank, or the Care of your Reputation.

If Men had never had any Resentment of an Injury, or had never Hated any body, I believe they wou'd not have thought of making a Question among Christians, whether a Man of a Superior Quality may in Conscience forbear seeing an Inferior who has Offended him. These Difficulties have not come into the Mind, till after there had been Resentment in the Heart, and in the proposing them, Men seek less to preserve their Rank, than their Hatred.

To plead ones Station and ones Quality for not making Advances to an Enemy, is to give for a Reason of not doing it, that which of all Reasons perhaps makes us the most oblig'd to do it. The more you are above him, the more you will Gain upon him by making him Ad-

vances.

No Advances shorten the way to Reconciliation so much, as those of a Man of Quality to his Inserior.

There is an Obligation to maintain ones Rank, but there is another much more Sacred and more Important Obligation, which is to endeavour and to contribute to the Salvation of our Neighbour; by remitting somewhat of your Rank, you oblige your Enemy to Sacrifice all his Hatred, what he Sacrifices to you may well make you amends for the Sacrifice you make him.

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You are afraid that your Advances will make him more Haughty and more Proud; that is to fay, you are afraid all the Fault shou'd be on his side; resusing him your Advances for this Reason, is resolving to share the Fault with him. You consider him too much, content your self with not letting the Fault be on your side.

I will see him, say some, that all the Fault may be his. To see him on this Principle, is to lose all the Value of your Advances; 'tis not on what he may do, or not do, that you ought to make Advances, but on the Obligation you have to do it; don't trouble your self about what he will do; do your self what you

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There is no Farce more Burlesque and more Fantastick, than that which Vanity gives in most Reconciliations; not only the Number of Steps that each ought to make is concerted, but the Degrees of Salutations, the Quality of the Terms, and even to the tone with which they shou'd be pronounc'd. A Reconciliation made with such exactness of Weight and Measure is of no worth in the Sight of God; studying the Outside so carefully, is a sign one means only to be outwardly Reconcil'd.

In most Reconciliations they commonly leave the State of the Question, to treat of other Matters; they do not argue on such Occasions, the Obligation of loving our Neighbour, and of being Reconcil'd to him; they only argue such Questions as respect the Rights and Privileges of each Person. They never say I am a Christian, but they say I am his Senior, I am a Bi-

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shop, a Duke, and Peer; they go turn over all the Privileges of Dukes, Peers, and Bishops, when they shou'd only read two or three words of

the Gospel.

The Ordinances established by Princes concerning the differences among the Nobility, are only Laws of Discipline, and he who has submitted to the rigour of those Ordinances, and has embraced his Enemy, has done but one half of his Duty; there remains another more Sacred Ordinance which he ought to obey, its that of God, who Commands him to Love that Person, whom the Grand Marshal has made him Embrace.

Nothing shews more how little Christianity there is, than the manner with which People espouse the Quarrels or the Hatred of their Relations and Friends; a Gentleman who has given a Blow to another, is thought to have given it to all his Family, and to all his Posterity down to the third or sourth Generation; there are Families at this day in Division for Injuries done in the last Age. This is the only Case in which it is made a point of Honour to Damn ones self for others.

There is one incontestable proof that a Man has no Religion, or that he is Mad, which is

his Engaging in a Duel.

I despair of the Salvation, and the Religion of the Nobility as long as they shall think that it is not allowable for them to forget and to forgive an Affront; and to make Vengeance a necessary Law for them, is declaring them incapable of the Kingdom of Heaven.

That

That Prince will of all others best shew that he has Religion, who abolishes Duelling,

A Gentleman who challenges his Enemy to Fight, shews less the Courage than the Corrup-

tion of his Heart.

A Philosopher has said that there was more Weakness in revenging an Injury than in forgiving it. If a Christian says the same thing, it only so far as the strength which comes from God is above that of Man; and if that Fortitude which makes you forget an Injury, is not sounded on the Fear and Love of God, it is of no account: I shall not decide which is the Braver or the Weaker of the two, he who forgives because there is a glory in forgiving, or he who revenges because there is a glory in revenging. Both the one and the other is equally condemned by God.

When a Man forgives an Injury, he wou'd have it thought that he is Generous; I shall only think him Generous so sar as I think him a

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To forgive an Injury out of Generosity is but the rough Draught of a good Action, Christia-

nity must put the last Hand to it.

§. 3. There is no Case perhaps in which People are more unsincere than on that of Reconciliation; some will say they wou'd willingly be Reconcil'd, and those have no Mind to it; others earnestly desire it, and they say they will not be Reconciled.

S. 4. A Man, who confenting to fee his Enemy, requires as a Condition that nothing shall be talked of, and that there shall be no arguing

of the Case, shews that he looks on him still as his Enemy; People think he shuns talking on the Subject, either out of Prudence, or Vanity, they are mistaken; for one who has those Motives, there are a hundred who have another, which is, that they have not yet resolved to forgive.

It is not allowable to argue the Case when one is to be Reconcil'd, unless one can be assur'd of two things, first that one is no longer Angry, and next that one will not become

Angry.

The strongest Obstacle to Reconciliation is the opening of the Case which preceeds it, this is the last resuge for the Vanity, and the Hatred, of those who are upon a Reconcilement.

If it is Prudence in a Man who undertakes a Reconcilement to make the Persons shun all Discoursing on the Subject, 'tis only because he supposes that the Quarrel is not yet at an End.

A Man who upon a Reconcilement owns that he has been to blame, wou'd often be very Sorry to be believ'd. Men only think in confenting to a Reconciliation, of sparing themselves the Shame of it, they don't think of se-

curing to themselves the Merit of it.

A Man who has undertaken the Care of making a Reconciliation, is often in Pain what way he shou'd take to propose it to those he wou'd Reconcile; for this he observes the Hours and critical Moments, and will not go to see them but arm'd with Reasons and Artistices to lead them to the Point of hearkning to the Proposition he intends to make them: He does

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not know that Interest, Policy, or love of Eafe, are got before-hand with him, that those he thinks to averse to a Reconciliation, wait only to declare themselves till some body Propose it to them, and that they are weary of being Angry.

A Man often attributes to himself the glory of a Reconciliation, which Policy alone has made, he thinks the Persons have yielded to his Reasons, when they have only yielded to their own Interest, or to their Repose. They let him think fo to do him a Pleasure, and to do

themselves one too.

To Quarrel with the Person one loves, is to give ones felf a voluntary Vexation, and to feem averse to a Reconciliation to which our Inclination carries us, is to lose the glory of it.

When one has been Angry without a Cause, there is but one way to repair the Fault, which is to be Reconcil'd speedily, and with a good

Grace.

There are fome Persons who deal with those who wou'd be Reconcil'd to them, as Tradefmen do with those who have a Mind for a piece of Stuff; the more one shews an Inclination for it, the dearer they will rate it.

A Man who fees himself Courted by an Enemy shou'd have but one regret which is that he

has let himself be prevented.

'Tis thought mean to Court a Friend who will not be Reconcil'd, but the meanness is only on his fide who refules it.

To Quarrel with ones Friends is not a fign that one does not love them; 'tis a fign that one XA does

does not know how we shou'd love them. Most Friendships are neither Christian nor Solid Friendships; if I am asked a Proof of this. I shall alledge the Facility with which Friends daily fall out with one another. And byer med

The World thinks that after a Quarrel of confequence, and that has made a Noise, it is Weakness and Imprudence to return to the same Terms they were in before; the World is not

Christian.

The World thinks one must not return to the fame Terms but by degrees, that Coldness is a necessary Decency. Once again the World is not Christian.

The little Confusion and Disorder that People are in when they meet and accost one another, for some Days after a Reconciliation, are remains of Shame or Vanity, which Christianity wou'd instantly diffipate, if the Reconciliation was Christian.

There is a real Pleasure in being Reconcil'd, but that Pleasure is not tasted Entire, unless the Reconcilement is made on a Christian Motive.

There are Perfons who Swear they will never be Reconcil'd; those Persons say more than they think, or than the Heart can be stedfast in.

... When Quarrels last, the Heart commonly returns first, the rest has more difficulty to return; and often the difficulty one finds to bring over the rest, detains the Heart, Many Persons remain at Variance only because they don't know how to go about to be Reconcil'd, Christianity alone is the certain means to remove Difficulty.

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To ask whether a Christian can with a good Conscience resuse to be Reconcil'd? Is to ask whether a Christian who can neither Pray to God, nor be present at the Publick Worship, can have a good Conscience?

Heart that refuses to be Reconcil'd, is obliging the Priest to Lie; and to Pray to God in that State, is Lying to him ones self: The Priest protests to God that all who assist at the Sacrifice are United; and we must suppress one of the Petitions of the Lord's Prayer, if we will say it with a Heart full of Hatred to our Neighbour.

There is but one Prayer allow'd to him who will not be Reconcil'd, that is to beg the Grace of being dispos'd to Reconciliation; but dares one ask that Grace when one wou'd not obtain it?

To fay that you will always Hate your Enemy, is to forget that your Enemy may change, and that you your felf may change.

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Hatred of the Person, say Divines, is never allowable; that is to say, it is not allow'd to Hate a Man because he is such a one, you Hate him at most because he is Unjust to you; you cannot then resolve to Hate him always, unless you despair that he can ever become good.

When you say, I will never see him nor hear him spoke of, you forget that on your Death-Bed he will be the first Person that must be spoke of to you, and whom you will be oblig'd to see; why shou'd you not do now, what you will do then.

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The Reconciliations which People make and are required to make on a Death-bed, do not extinguish the Enmity, they only take away the Scandal; and a Man who has Sworn not to love his Enemy during his whole Life, has without knowing it Swora not to love him at his Death; the asking Perdon of him when he is Dying, is commonly a kind of Ceremony, in which the Heart has no share.

If People think that their asking forgiveness at Death is Sincere, they are to blame not to have ask'd it fooner; 'tis ridiculous to Swear they will never do what they well know they

will do at last.

When you fay that you will never fee your Enemy, you are oblig'd to me if I think that

you don't know what you fay.

S. c. The fole Authority of God shou'd suffice to oblige a Man to forgive an Injury, tho' the Injury were yet more grievous than it is. more fenfible and the more cruel an Injury is, the more joy a Christian shou'd have to give, in pardoning it, such a Mark of his Submission to God.

You are told that God Commands you to forgive, you answer that the Injury is too great to be forgiven; you forget that 'tis because the Injury is great, that the Authority of God is urg'd to you; if it were a triffle you wou'd have no need of that Authority; you wou'd forgive it of your felt.

You cannot you fay excuse your Neighbour, the more you confider the Injury he has done you the more hainous you find it; 'tis therefore

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that you ought to Pardon it for the Love of God.

To think an Injury is Hainous, is to give ones felf a Proof, in forgiving it, that one only

forgives it for God's fake.

Your Interest, your Honour, every thing in fine requires you to revenge it, there is only God who forbids it you; if then you do not avenge your self, you may say you only forbear it in Obedience to God.

Refusing to forgive an Injury because it is a Hainous one, is to take that for a Reason of not forgiving, which wou'd augment the Merit of it

if one did forgive.

The Person the least capable to judge rightly of an Injury, is he that receives it, he always magnifies it; and to say such a Man has done me an intolerable Injury, means nothing else than that the Injury which this Man has done me seems to me intolerable.

'Tis a Hainous Injury, you say; that which renders it Hainous is not so much the Manner in which it is done, as that in which you receive it; it seems Hainous to you because you are Vain, Proud, easily Offended; you ought at least then not to charge on him who has done you the Injury, all that your Vanity and your Self-love adds to the Injury he does you.

Men think Injuries Hainous, only because they are much moved by them; and they are only moved by them because they are not good

Christians.

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A good Christian never receives any but

If

If we wou'd examine the Disposition we were in towards him who does us an Injury, before he did it, perhaps we shou'd find that in Injuring us, he has only prevented us, and that we think all the ill of him that he has said of us.

We are commonly only sensible of an Injury because our Enemy has been before-hand with us; Thus what chiefly Provokes us against him that has Injur'd us, is often only the Vexation to see him more diligent and quicker than we. Ought we to be so Angry with him for having done that to us, which we wou'd willingly have done to him?

But if the Disposition we were in before we receiv'd the Injury, shews us how much we are in the wrong to Resent it, the Disposition in which we are after having receiv'd it, does not condemn us less; does all that He who has done us the Injury cou'd think of us, come near to what we think of him after he has done it? And is not the Mischief he has done us, still less than that which we wou'd do to him?

The proceeding which is usual after having receiv'd an Affront, authorises that of the Enemy who gave it, and the Manner with which one speaks of him, and by which one endeavours to be Reveng'd of him, diminishes the Fault he committed in Offending us.

The Guilt of him who does an Injury, never appears at its full height, but when one does not revenge it.

Injury they have received, only by the Judgment which they think the Publick will make

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of it; they forget that the Publick is yet less capable to judge rightly of an Injury, than he that does or he that receives it.

To take for a Rule of ones Conduct and of ones Judgment, so unequal and so Fantastick a Judge as the Publick usually is, is to be more

unreasonable than it.

It is very rarely that the Publick has one Uniform Sentiment of the same Injury, we find every Day a thing which is related in one House as a grievous Affront, will be spoke of in another as a trifle.

There is only one who judges Equitably of an Injury, that is He who wou'd have it par-

don'd and forgot.

To speak to a Man again of an Injury that one has forgiven him, is designing to do him one; and to upbraid him with having forgiven him an Injury, is repenting that one has for-

given it.

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All that recals the remembrance of an Injury is reproaching one with it, tho' it were Caresses and Civilities. Since we were Reconcil'd together I find you affectedly Exact on Geremonies, and Decorums; I shou'd like you better, if you were more careless, less Civility wou'd shew the Reconciliation more sincere.

'Tis thought a mighty Commendation of a Man, when one fays that the more Injuries have been done him, the more eager he is to Carefs those who have done them: I shou'd think it were Praising him more to say that he Caresses them without Eagerness, and that he is just the same to them after having forgiven the Injury, as he was before he receiv'd it. To

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To say that to be sure of receiving Kindnesses from such a one, 'tis enough to have been his Enemy, is the praise of an Orator: A Man is more commendable when he only does Kindnesses to his Enemy, just as he wou'd have done

if he had never been his Enemy.

If an Eagerness in Carelling, and a Preserence in doing Kindnesses to a Man whom one has forgiven an Injury, is only intended the better to remove the Scandal their Enmity gave, if 'tis us'd as a means to bring ones self by that Effort, to be again on the same Foot with him that one was before the Injury, I then Praise him who has that Eagerness and who gives that Preserence, and I unsay for him all that I have now been saying.

\$ 7. Those Enmities that break out are not the most Dangerous, their breaking out is often

their Cure:

What ails you, Sir? Say I to a Friend whom I find cold; Nothing, answers he coldly, are you angry with me? Say I; Why do you ask me that, replies he, have you given me Cause? I am an Hour in asking him the same thing, He answers me still with the same Coldness, that nothing ails him, but I leave him sully persuaded that something does ail him.

To be Angry without telling what one is

angry at, is resolving to be always Angry.

Man come to himself who is Angry unaccountably and without Cause, that is not to seem to perceive it: But Religion forbids this Means, it obliges us to be concern'd even for ill-ground-

ed Coldnesses, and to help with more Charity

to regain our Neighbour.

§. 8. There is no City, Family, or House, in which there are not some Quarrels; but it is wonderful that there are not more of them. Men being so little Masters as they are of their Caprice, their Vanity, and their Tongues.

Having a great deal of Vanity, is being al-

ways in a near occasion of some Quarrel.

Women are almost always at Variance with one another, 'tis because they have almost all a

Spirit of Ascendency.

S. 9. The only way to have no Quarrels or Enemies, is to have but little Self-love, to get the Mastery of ones Humours, to speak little, to hearken yet less to those who talk much, and to meddle only with ones own Business; If with these Dispositions one cannot however avoid having some Quarrels, they will serve at least to put an End to them very soon.

When one is well refolved to have no Enemies, one has none; no body is ever long Angry, with one who will not be provok'd to

Anger.

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